

912 NEW YEAR'S NUMBER 191

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THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE



Stories by Baroness Von Hutten, Elliott Flowe
Ellis Parker Butler, George Hibbard, Ethel Trail
Hugh Johnson, John A. Moroso and nine others

For a
feast
let it be
OYSTERS
fried to
perfection
in the
Snider way
and served
with plenty
of the
luscious



FRID OYSTERS

One pint large oysters, half cup flour, half cup milk, half cup Snider's Tomato Catsup, half teaspoonful salt. Mix thoroughly the flour, milk, catsup and salt; dip oysters into mixture, then roll them in cracker crumbs; fry in sweet, fresh lard until a dark brown. Serve very hot.

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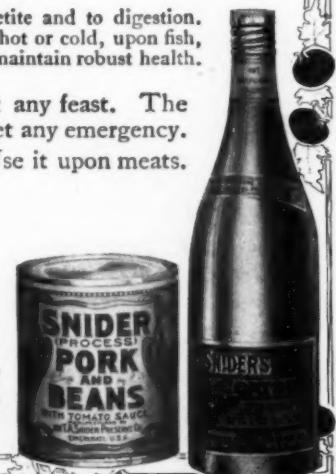
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THE RED BOOK

MAGAZINE

EDITED BY KARL EDWIN HARRIMAN

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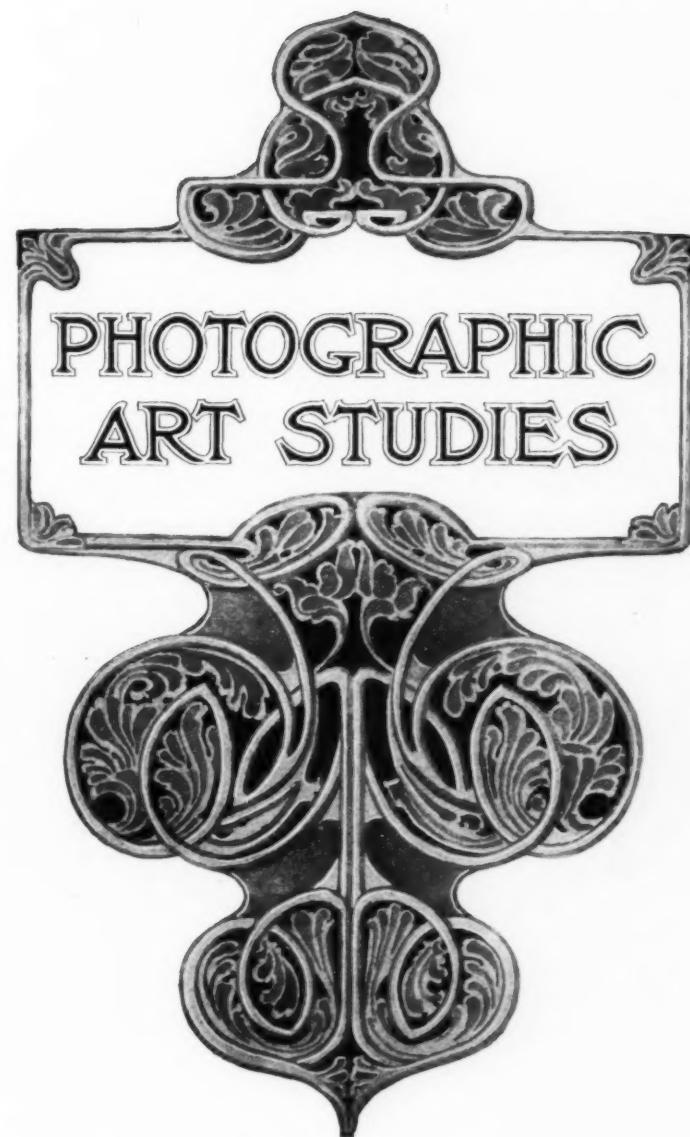
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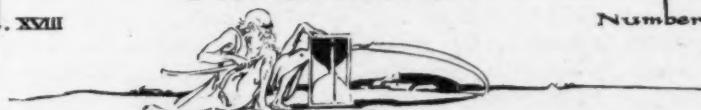
"It was too bad to spoil Florry's evening for nothing, Mrs. Hillhurst"

To accompany "The Governess,"—see page 535

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

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JANUARY 1912

COBB by BARONESS VON HUTTEN

Author of "Pam," "Pam Decider," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GAYLE HOSKINS



LITTLE Lady Lydia smiled excitedly up into the face of her distinguished cousin and guest as she shook hands with him.

"It is so splendid," she said in her perfectly sincere, gushing way. "Hector and I are so proud of you."

He did not speak, but his dark face changed to something that was not quite a smile. This expression she answered.

"Oh, I know; Hector refused to help you before you went—he didn't believe in you, and—oh well, Jim, no one ever is proud of what people say they are going to do. Hector and I are exactly like everyone else—only rather nicer—and so, now that you have *done* it, we are simply bursting with satisfaction and pride. And a practical man like you

surely understands, and will not ask for the impossible!"

Her gay, little manner suited her gay, little face and her gay, little voice in the most perfect way. She was forty, looked thirty, and had changed surprisingly little since she was ten.

Singleton laughed. "I ask for nothing, my little cousin," he said, sitting down by the fire and holding his brown hands to its warmth. "I am not an asking person. It was Hector who looked me up to-day, mind you, not I Hector."

As he spoke he grew grave again, and she knew why.

"Look here, Jim, I know what you are thinking; perhaps he should have lent you that money, but—"

"Don't, Lyddy. I am forty-three years

old, and my asking Hector for that loan is the only thing I ever did of which I am—ashamed. Don't remind me of it again, please."

Before she had time to answer, Hector Brodrick and a male guest came into the room, and no more could be said.

Brodrick, the accepted type of successful City man, was several years older than his famous cousin-in-law, and the two had been at Cambridge together. Singleton, as he watched him that evening, wondered why he, Singleton, could ever have thought they were friends.

And yet for several years, this had been his belief.

Brodrick was growing fat, and somehow the superfluous tissue seemed to reveal, rather than conceal, the faultiness of his bony structure.

Several people came in, and Singleton made his bows without his thoughts being interrupted. Yes, how could he ever have believed Brodrick to be his friend, or himself Brodrick's?

He could hardly realize that Brodrick, so indifferent to him now, had ever raised the horrible feeling of real hatred that he had felt that evening four years ago as he left the house after being refused the modest loan that, he believed, could alone make his exploring project possible.

He had, he remembered, paused at the street corner and looked back at the house, vowing that never again would he set foot in it. And yet, he mused, bowing yet again to a tall woman in black, as their names were inarticulately murmured by Brodrick, whose attention had been caught by Singleton's face—and yet, here he was, not only in the house, but its honored guest, Lydia's lion, at whom all these strange people had come to gaze.

In the dazzling light of his great achievement, minor events in his life lost their distinctness. Brodrick's lack of faith no longer mattered. In spite of the older man's refusal to help him, he had got to Africa and accomplished what had, in the old days, seemed to everyone but himself a perfectly wild dream.

To everyone in the room except the host and hostess, Singleton seemed simply a rather silent man, much like any other gentleman. He was disappointingly correct and unoriginal in his manner, his clothes, the very cut of his dark hair.

"He doesn't look at all as though he had lived in the jungle for nearly three years," remarked one woman to her partner as they went in to dinner.

"He hasn't, Miss Cosway. Africa isn't all jungle, by a long way. I wish I knew about my job one tenth as much as he knows about his. They say—"

"Yes, he's my wife's cousin," Brodrick was confiding to his right-hand neighbor, an old woman whose pearls made the skin of her aged neck look rather horrible. "They were always great pals; we were at Cambridge together—good fellow, very."

"Is it true, Mr. Brodrick," put in the lady on his left, "that he went to Africa third-class without a shilling in his pocket?"

Brodrick winced. Ever since the news of the great discovery had come back to England, he had cursed himself for not having lent Singleton that money; it would have been so pleasant to have been the patron of this celebrity, to be able to say, "I had a modest finger in that N'Gola River business myself, you know—"

That was the way his imagination phrased it: "a modest finger."

Singleton, meantime, was eating his fish with a good appetite. He had arrived in England only that morning, and had had no time for eating. He had had no time for anything. The very clothes on his back were borrowed from a brother. He was conscious, as he sat between Lydia and the tall woman in black whose name he had not caught, of two feelings: gratitude to the gods for Brodrick's excellent cook, and real wonder that on seven or eight hours' notice, his cousin had been able to arrange so large and distinguished a party.

For Lady Lydia had told him as he ate his soup, who all the people were, and many of their names were familiar.

"I wonder they weren't all busy," he said, innocently.

She laughed. "They were. The Admiral broke an engagement to come to meet you, and I dare say *all* the women did! You forget, my dear Jim, that you are the hero of the hour."

The hero of the hour was a modest man, and hungry. Presently he turned to his right-hand neighbor. "This is very—" he began. Then he broke off.

She was a pale, rather thin-faced woman with a beautifully shaped jawbone. And when she raised her eyes and looked at him something inside him seemed to turn over with a bump. He had never in his life seen such eyes; they were brown, a clear, luminous gold-brown into which he found himself staring like a man losing his senses. They were homes of sorrow, yet of gentle mirth; they were the only eyes into which he had ever longed to go on looking forever.

James Singleton had, between one swallow of wine, and the next, fallen in love.

He set his glass down carefully. "I have forgotten what I was going to say," he stammered.

She laughed. "I look like some one you used to know?" she asked, studiously turning her eyes away from his. "I so often do. And then if I ever meet the person I am supposed to resemble, or see her picture, I am either perfectly furious, or convinced that the man who told me I did, was mad."

"It's always a man, I suppose?" Singleton at that moment hated all men.

She laughed. "Usually. My mother-in-law, who loathes me, used to say that it was because I have no personality."

She paused, tranquilly sure, he knew, that he would not think she wished him to contradict this ridiculous theory.

"You are married, then," he blurted out, as savagely as anyone could have demanded from the most uncouth explorer.

For a moment she hesitated. Then she said, locking at him from under her lashes, as if she did not wish him to see her do so:

"Yes."

Presently some one brought the conversation around to Africa; presumably Singleton answered questions and told one or two anecdotes of his experiences; at least, when the ladies had gone, and the men sat alone in the dining-room, no one seemed to think him remiss in any way, and some one was telling an interminable tale about Stanley. So Singleton knew that he must have behaved more or less sanely.

But he was never, to the end of his life, able to remember one word that was spoken after his thin-faced neighbor said "yes" to his unconventional question.

As the story about Stanley at last came to its undramatic end, and the talk went on, he smoked silently, and as soon as it was possible, went upstairs under some pretext about telling Lydia something.

"Silent chap, aint he?" one man said, as the door closed.

"Always was. When we were at Cambridge together—" returned Brodrick.

A fat man, an emperor amongst journalists, gave a little chuckle.

"I wonder how soon the inevitable will happen."

"The inevitable what?" asked the Admiral, rather irritably.

"Oh, the usual accusation of having murdered natives. It always comes, you know. It may be called the fly in the exploratory ointment—"

"It'll come," remarked an old man who had been in the last conservative Government, and who hated the journalist, "just as soon as you *deny* it in one of your papers."

The journalist laughed good-naturedly. "My dear Sir Edward!" he protested.

Meantime Singleton had gone through with the classic process known as joining the ladies. He walked straight to his cousin, talked to her for a few minutes, wrote his name on the fan of a pretty girl with flame-red hair and corresponding fierceness in her enthusiasm, was civil to two important dowagers, and then sat boldly down by the thin-faced woman.

He never remembered what it was that they talked about, but he never forgot the little discoveries he made about her; that her hands were of a remarkable beauty that extended even to her thumbs; that she wore no rings; that her eyes had little lines round them; that there was a little brown mole on her neck, under her right ear; that her hair was of the old-fashioned, silky kind, and as nearly black as brown hair can be; that she wore in her ears black pearls that were probably of enormous value; that her voice had a certain slight huskiness that to him was exquisitely beautiful.

And because he was a man who was never dishonest with himself, he mentally admitted from the very first that he loved her.

When she rose to go, amongst the first to leave, he said, his hand clasped round hers: "Good-by."

"Good-by."

After a second he added: "You know why."

Her dark eyes were raised for a moment to his light ones. Then she answered as directly as he had spoken. "Yes, I know."

"I shall never see you again, but—I shall never forget you," he continued.

To this she said only: "Good-by again," and left him.

When all the other guests had gone, Lady Lydia, Brodrick and Singleton sat for half an hour by the fire.

Brodrick was very expansive and a little noisy. He was a man who, living among people of personal importance, never himself rose above the importance of possession, and the knowledge chafed him at times nearly beyond endurance. This was one of the times, and he was talking fast and loud, to reassure himself.

Singleton hardly heard him, and little Lady Lydia, evidently tired, sat in nearly unbroken silence, smoking cigarette after cigarette.

Brodrick was now planning a series of dinners at which the explorer was to meet all the interesting people in, or just outside, his host's circle. "He'll like

Gathorne, Lydia, too, wont he? A decent chap, Gathorne, and I suppose knows more about radium than anyone living, bar that Frenchwoman, Madame What's-her-name—"

Suddenly, seeing that neither of the other two was listening to him, he broke off, impatiently.

"Well—to change the subject, Jim," he said, "how did you like Mrs. Shaw? I saw you seemed to hit it off all right—"

"Mrs. Shaw—"

"Yes. The woman who sat on your right—living skeleton, *I* call her."

"I asked her to come," put in Lady Lydia, speaking for the first time, "because I thought that it might interest you; her husband was—Marston Shaw, you know—"

"Marston Shaw," repeated Singleton slowly, "but good God, he's dead!"

Lady Lydia stared. "Of course he's dead," she said.

II

Simon Cobb, Mrs. Shaw's butler, was putting a log on the library fire. Being a man of enormous physical strength he lifted with one hand a great log that had once been part of a sea-going ship, and laid it on the glowing ashes with as great ease as if it had weighed not more than the Italian pine-cone he subsequently tucked under it to help the languid flames.

Mrs. Shaw, who sat at her writing-table, laid down her pen and watched him. This queer servant of hers amused as well as satisfied her, and she took a certain pride in him.

"That log would need two ordinary men to lift it, Cobb," she observed.

"Yes, Madam."

"If you ever left me, I should have to have a footman—or else close the library in the winter."

Cobb rose, rubbing his great hands together to brush away the dust that clung to them.

"I shall never leave you, Mrs. Shaw," he said, gravely.

When he forgot to say Madam, and



"I will carry him up to my room," Cobb announced

called her by her name as he had done years ago, before he was her servant, or anyone else's, she knew whither his thoughts had gone.

"Thank God, Cobb," was her answer, given in a very gentle voice.

She came to the vast hearth, one of her dead husband's caprices, and stood watching the little flames as they caressed the great log into warmth before destroying it.

"These logs remind me of—him," Cobb remarked, after a pause. "And the fire," he meditatively added, "of—you."

The simple way in which she received this extraordinary remark pointed clearly to the unusualness of their relation to each other.

"Of me—the flames? Why?"

The man paused, not out of fear that his words might offend her, but because his mind was of those that collect the words necessary to the expression of their thoughts, before their owner begins to speak.

"Well—he was big, and strong, and heavy. And he had been at sea, God knows, and was full of salt—and you were—little and bright, and you—just watch the fire a minute, Mrs. Shaw, and you will see for yourself what I mean."

"I do see, Cobb—ah, there's the bell. Bring tea when I ring."

The man straightened himself into the correct position of the well trained servant, and left the room.

Mrs. Shaw, like many people who live much alone, was easily absorbed in her own thoughts. When the door presently opened and Cobb showed in a caller, she had forgotten the ring at the door, and was again gazing into the fire.

"Mr. Singleton, Madam."

She started and, turning, beheld two strangely agitated faces, that of her caller, and that of her servant. Singleton's was very white, Cobb's a dusky red. Their mouths both shook a little.

As she advanced, Cobb withdrew.

"Why," began Singleton abruptly, "did you tell me the night before last that you were married?"

"I—I am," she answered, her head held a little high.

"No. You are a widow. Lydia told me after you had gone, and—I could not get here yesterday; one thing after another tied me down. It was infernal—"

There was no use in pretending to misunderstand him.

"I told you that I was married," she returned, deliberately, a little spot of color in each thin cheek, "and—I am. You would say, probably, that I loved, that I adored my husband. Well—I say that I love, that I adore him, *now*."

There was a short pause.

In the silence the great log began to crackle, to spout out little columns of sparks.

Singleton's dark face, in which the gray eyes looked sometimes almost white, paled still more.

"You mean—you can see what *I* mean—it's—it's the first time in my life and—I could see no sense in waiting to tell you—besides, you *knew* the other night, that's why you tried to make me think you were married."

"I am married, Mr. Singleton," she repeated. "Indeed I am. I am just as much bound to my husband as if he were, say, in Paris this afternoon."

"That is nonsense," he retorted, adding gently: "Please forgive me. You—you hurt me."

"Oh yes, of course I forgive you. Now—shall we talk of something else?"

Her face had lost its sudden color and looked thinner and more worn than ever; indeed, as she bent over in the fire-light she was almost haggard. He troubled her, this man; she could not be quite herself with him; and then she could not forget that he had known her husband well, years ago, before she was married.

As if in answer to her thoughts he said suddenly: "Did you know that I knew your husband—and well?"

"Yes. I have heard him speak of you. If—if I had known where you were, I should have written to tell you of his death. He was fond of you."

"Yes. We were friends. Mrs. Shaw, if you won't marry me you will not be spoiling my life for the first time," he added, his black and very mobile eye-

brows almost flashing in their quick motion.

"What—what do you mean?"

"I mean that when he married you and—chucked us out there, I thought a part of me was—dead. I suppose—I know that he never told you—"

She drew closer to the hearth, and took up a fire screen on which was painted a bright scarlet parrot, to protect her eyes from the now leaping light.

"Tell me," she said with the shortness of concentrated interest.

"Well—the first time I went out, you know, he was there. I had a little money then, and was chiefly after big game. We had some elephant-shooting together, just for luck, and then, somehow, he told me so much about the N'Gola and that part of the country that I joined his expedition. His second, my first. It—got into my blood, somehow," he went on, "and for good. I could never give it up. Not even if you would marry me I could not give up Africa—"

"He did," she heard herself say.

"Yes. Oh yes. That was your fault."

She was not a very patient woman, and her temper rose a little.

"My fault, Mr. Singleton?"

"Yes." He was, in his absorption, quite oblivious of her annoyance. "He would have done what I have done, and a thousand times more, if—"

"If he had not married me. You are not very courteous."

"What I have done is nothing to what Marston Shaw could have done. He would practically have re-made the geography of a quarter of the continent of Africa. He would—"

Suddenly she was sorry for him. Sorry because she knew that in a moment he would awaken to the present, and suffer.

"There was nothing he couldn't have done; he was a genius," he went on dreamily.

"Instead of which, Mr. Singleton, he had—five perfectly happy years."

"Eh, what?" He started as if he had been asleep.

"Five—ah yes, five perfectly happy years."

The room was nearly dark now, but for the great red-brick chimney which glowed like a furnace.

Mrs. Shaw wished to move, to switch on the lights, but for some reason she could not.

"Tell me," Singleton said, turning, and looking at her. "I shall be glad to know about it—"

"I can tell you only that. That until he died we were never separated for more than two or three hours; that we were so happy that—I can't talk about it even yet, Mr. Singleton, and it is three years since he died."

There was another long silence.

"I knew he was happy," Singleton began, at last, forcing his voice to a more conventional tone. "He used to write to me, you know. What was the song you sang, the one he loved so?"

She started. "He even wrote you about that?"

"Yes," answered Singleton, immovably. "Why not? We were friends."

"Still—ah well! The song was a very old one, *'Still wie die Nacht.'* He used to say it reminded him of the quiet of an African night."

"Sing it to me."

It was not a request; he did not say please, but sat there in the bright fire-light looking at her, his eyes almost like drops of clear water, they looked so light.

"I never sing it," she began, and at that moment the door opened and Cobb entered bearing a great tray on which everything necessary to tea-making, from a huge kettle, its flame already alight, to the bread and butter and cakes.

"I told you not to bring tea until I rang," she said, a little vexed.

"It is after five. I thought you had forgotten."

"Sing the night-song," urged Singleton, disregarding, or not observing the servant's presence.

"I—I would rather not."

Cobb still stood near the door, still bearing his great burden. Suddenly he spoke.

"Yes, Mrs. Shaw, sing it for Mr. Singleton."

Singleton rose suddenly. "My God, it's Cobb!" he cried.

Mrs. Shaw switched on the light and the two men stared at each other.

"Yes, it's Cobb. You didn't recognize me when I opened the door to you—"

"But Lord save us, man, put down that tray and let me shake your hand. To think of finding you here!"

Cobb set down the tray, and the two men shook hands warmly.

"Then *this* is where you went, when you deserted Africa? Oh, shame on you, Simon Cobb," went on Singleton. "Wasn't one traitor enough?"

"He wasn't a traitor," Cobb returned. "He married, so of course he had to give it up—"

Eva Shaw stood watching the strange little scene in an unbroken silence. Her calm, her beautiful calm which had followed her many months of helpless grief over her loss, was breaking up 'round her, like ice. It seemed to her that she could see the dark cracks spread. And she could not see why.

She felt a little giddy, a little ill, quite suddenly, and leaned against a chair.

Should she sing Marston's song to this extraordinary stranger who had loved him and now loved her? For although she told herself that Singleton's haste was both undignified and absurd, something within her liked his impetuosity. She could never love him, but his impetuosity pleased her, and it not only never occurred to her to doubt his sincerity, but also she was convinced that his love would last.

And—should she sing the song, Marston's song, for him?

Suddenly a bell rang loudly, and was followed, in the library, by an as sudden silence.

It was the house-door bell.

"Are you—at home, Madam?" Cobb asked, drawing himself up as he had done at Singleton's ring, and falling into position.

"Yes—of course," she answered, in the voice of mistress to servant. "And—

you had better bring more hot water, Cobb, that will be nearly boiled away."

III

The next day Singleton came again. It was raining hard, and he shivered slightly, and asked to be allowed to sit very close to the fire.

Mrs. Shaw had received him in the drawing-room, and the fireplace there was an ordinary one, the fire a mere handful of coals.

"You see me here," said Singleton with a faint smile, "because it is more formal; you wish to keep me in my place."

"I see you here because I happened to be sitting here. I had no idea you would come again so soon," she returned, coldly.

He looked at her. "Hadn't you? Marston would have known—that I would come again."

She did not answer, and he continued, holding his cold-looking hands to the little fire. "I wonder, if you had not been in India that year when I came home, what would have happened."

She was still silent.

"That was a dreadful time for me. I was here seven months, trying to raise money to go up the N'Gola. I knew I was right about the Big River, and no one believed me. *No* one, I had lost all my money, too—"

"And finally went out third-class—Oh, I know. It is all in the papers," she interrupted him, impatiently.

He looked up at her. "Is it? Well, if Marston had been here, he would have helped. *He* could have got up a syndicate to float me. People believed in *him*," he went on bitterly, thinking of his past troubles. "No one on God's earth believed in *me*."

Again she felt the curious pity that had stirred her the day before; only now it took a definite form. She wanted, for some reason, to lay her hand on his bent head.

"Well, it's all right now," she said, instead. "People believe in you now."



She looked at all her photographs of him: re-read his old letters

"Yes, but now—" He made a little gesture with his hand.

"Weren't you—weren't you surprised to find Cobb with me as my servant?" she asked, hastily.

"Yes. Tell me about it."

"Well—that year in Ceylon, when—when I met Marston, he was with him. He was so wonderful. He had been traveling with Marston up-country—they were after elephants—of course, just as a—as a—"

"Friend."

"Yes. And when my father and I appeared—Father was after butterflies—Mr. Cobb, seemed to—to make for himself a quite new position. He never talked about it, but he just became a kind of—well, courier—no—there's no word for it. He had a little money, you know, and was paying his own way. But—it is difficult to explain."

"I understand," said Singleton.

"Well—we were married at Colombo, and then crossed over to India. Cobb went with us as a matter of course. And when we came home when the hot weather began, he came too. He traveled second—but he had always done that, to save the money. Then we took this house, and he had a room here. I think none of us ever referred to his position; it just—grew gradually into what it was. He used to go away a good deal, but he always came back to his old room, and stayed as a matter of course."

Singleton nodded. "Then—Marston died?"

"Yes. But before, about two years before, Cobb lost his little fortune—it was very small. Then Marston called him his secretary—I don't remember ever to have seen a line of his writing in my life—and gave him a small salary. The money made no difference. They were as great friends as ever, and in the same way. Marston really loved Cobb, and Cobb—"

"I know."

She rose, restlessly. "Well—that's about all. When Marston died, I was very ill. My baby died, Mr. Singleton."

He did not answer.

"And when I was able to notice any-

thing, I found that Cobb had dismissed the butler for dishonesty, and was, in an unofficial way, doing the work himself. And little by little—one day I just found that Cobb *was* my butler. We have never talked about it," she finished.

She walked to the piano and back. Her cheeks were a dusky red, her wonderful eyes blazing.

"Shall I sing you that song?" she said.

IV

One night the following week, Eva Shaw came in after the opera, to find Singleton waiting to see her.

"Mr. Singleton is in the library, Madam," Cobb told her, in his stiffest manner.

"Oh, Cobb, it is far too late to see anyone."

"Not to see him."

"But—"

"Go and see him. He is ill—Madam," he added, plainly as an afterthought.

Singleton, indeed was shivering with a bad go of jungle fever. He looked to her unaccustomed eyes, horribly ill.

And she, in her white evening frock, looked to him absolutely beautiful.

This he told her.

"Nonsense. I was never beautiful, and I am—old now."

"Rubbish. Must I go?"

"Go—of course—in a minute or two. It—it is late," she stammered.

"You must sleep in my bed," declared Cobb, from the door. "You have a high fever, and it's a very bad night."

"Oh, no, Cobb—" protested Mrs. Shaw.

Cobb came towards the fire, looking positively gigantic.

"I tell you it would be dangerous for a man in his state to leave the house tonight," he said, adding, as he had done before, "Madam."

She looked at him. "Cobb—are you my—my servant, or are you *not*?" she asked. It was a most difficult speech, but she was determined to settle matters definitely.

Cobb gazed at her for a long time. "I

—I don't know," he said at length, hopelessly.

And on a sudden she saw that he was old. She had never before thought of his age. His great size and strength had seemed somehow to set him apart from other men and their ills.

Now she saw that the lines in his face had deepened very much, of late, that his bushy hair was almost gray.

"Sit down," she said.

He obeyed her.

"Cobb, we have got very much—tangled up—haven't we? But—I see it all quite clearly now. You have sacrificed years of your life for Mr. Shaw—and secondarily for me."

"Yes," answered Cobb, unmoved.

"Perhaps I shouldn't have allowed you to become a servant, but—as a matter of fact I didn't. You—just *did* it."

"Hush," said Cobb, "he's nearly asleep."

It was true. Singleton's head had fallen back against a lingerie pillow that Mrs. Shaw knew had been brought from her dressing-room, and his eyes were closed.

"I will carry him up to my room," Cobb announced, rising. "And I know just what to do for him. None of the servants need know that he is there, Madam."

Singleton, the greatest of Great Britain's explorers, lay for four days in the room of Mrs. Shaw's butler.

V

It was not until nearly six weeks after their meeting that Eva Shaw admitted to herself that she loved James Singleton.

The admission meant, in two ways, more than it means to most young widows of three years' standing. She had not only deeply loved Shaw, but her absolute devotion to his memory had become a kind of religion to her.

She was a perfectly sincere, unaffected woman, and life had seemed to her a desert since her husband died; his death had aged her by ten years.

But such are the complications of hu-

man nature, the attitude of her friends towards her attitude of eternal loss had become of appreciable value to her.

She was to a great many people *the* sorrowing widow, the heart-broken woman of poetry and fiction.

And these different things mingled, built around her a wall through which she dared not break.

Alone in the library, Marston Shaw's own private corner of the world into which during his life-time no one but herself and Cobb had ever been admitted, she now sat hour after hour trying to bring her mind back to its old altitude of courageously endured misery.

She looked at all her photographs of him, re-read his old letters, even sat huddled in his arm-chair with one of his pipes on her lap, trying to visualize a dead man and to forget a living one.

She failed, of course.

And James Singleton knew that she had failed.

"You may say what you like," he told her one day shortly before Christmas, "but you do love me."

Her small face was thinner than ever, the jaw bone more accentuated. She looked very worn and very unhappy.

Bravely she lied: "No—I do not love you. It is not that. It is that—I like you very much, and—I have been lonely."

Singleton was going back to Africa in February, and for the hundredth time he had urged her to go with him. Suddenly his insistence on this point annoyed her.

"Even if—if I *did*—care for you," she asked, her voice a little sharp, "what right would you have to ask me to go out to that awful country?"

He stared. "What right? Why, *every* right. It is my life-work, my work out there. I have a house—I have shares in two valuable mines. I have made a place for myself there, and it is my home. Of course you'd go."

She gazed into the fire.

"If I consented—if that imaginary Eva Shaw who loves you—consented to give up England, to live out there with you, you would not expect her to allow you to go on exploring?"

"Allow me? There will be no question of your *allowing* me to carry out what is my life-work. It is the best of me. And, of course, it would go on."

He glared fiercely into the fire, his expressive eyebrows knitted.

She was angry, yet she wanted to laugh, and at the same time, of course, she adored him for his strength of purpose.

After a pause she said coolly: "No, there will be no question of my 'allowing' you to do things, for I am not going to marry you."

He paid no attention to her words. She was not even sure that he had heard them. He was thinking hard.

"It is well," she resumed, driven by a strange necessity every woman feels at times: that of hurting herself through hurting the man she loves, "that as I was fated to marry an African explorer, I met Marston first, and married him. His love was very great; he sacrificed his work for its sake."

Singleton turned on her, "Yes," he thundered, "he did. He became a—a lap-dog—a man-of-fashion, the appendage of a pretty woman—and—"

"He never regretted it, whatever you may say." She, too, was angry now, and very pale. "You think I ruined his career. Well—he was happy, I tell you. Perfectly happy. And for five years. And I made him happy!"

They were both standing, breathing hard and looking into each other's eyes with something like hatred.

Singleton was a man of strong emotions and her words had filled him with a horrible jealousy.

"I—I will go," he said, slowly. "And I will never come back."

"Yes, *do* go. I—I—"

"Mrs. Shaw—"

They turned. Cobb stood in the doorway. He looked, somehow, as though he had been there a long time, and had heard their quarrel.

Neither of them could speak. It seemed in a queer way as if he belonged there; as if he had a right to stand looking at them with reproach, almost with rebuke in his ugly old face.

"Mrs. Shaw," he repeated after a moment, "may I—may I sit down?"

"Yes." She knew that in sitting down he, for the time, relinquished his butlership and reverted to his former nondescript position.

"There is something I want to tell you—both," he began, as he leaned forward, his great hands on his knees.

"I—I know about the trouble, of course. Oh, I haven't listened at doors, or anything of that kind, but—I know. And I understand, Mrs. Shaw, how you are feeling. You—May I speak quite open? Openly, I mean?"

She nodded.

"Well, everyone who ever saw you and Mr. Shaw together knows what you felt about him. He was a kind of god to you. As he was to me. He was a great man. And you have been adoring his memory, as Japanese people adore their ancestors. You have been putting flowers on his altar (in your mind) every day since he died. So have I. You don't know what he did for me, years ago when I first met him. I couldn't tell even you. But he saved me. And when he died I stayed with you because he asked me to. 'Cobb,' he said, 'you stay and take care of her. Some day she will need you.'

"Well—here I am. And I think this is the day when you do need me."

"Go on, Cobb." Her anger was gone, suddenly; her eyes were wet as she watched the strange, old giant who was her servant and her friend.

"I must be plain, then—"

"Be quite plain."

"Well—you ought to marry Mr. Singleton and go to Africa with him."

There was a pause that seemed to throb.

"But—"

"And go to Africa with him. No woman on God's earth has a right to come between a man and his work. You did it once, without knowing it. You must not do it again."

Admitting, by default, that she loved Singleton, she spoke. "Not even you must say that I did not make Mar—Mr. Shaw, happy, Cobb."



"Well, here I am, and I think this is the day when you do need me."

"I was here all the time. I know," returned the old man non-committally.

"You must not do it again."

She looked at a vivid crayon sketch of her husband that hung opposite her, and a horrible feeling of guilt towards him swept over her.

How could she even consider marrying again, after what they had been to each other?

She rose impetuously. "Cobb—I cannot talk about it. But you are wrong. Everyone is wrong who thinks that I ever—that I could ever marry—"

"Yes, you could." Cobb eyed her stonily. "And you must. And you must go to Africa with him."

Then Singleton spoke. "Out with it, Cobb," he said. "What is it?"

And Cobb's manner changed at once.

"It's this, Mr. Singleton: *he longed for Africa till the day he died.*"

There was a pause; then the old man continued, speaking very slowly, his eyes carefully averted from Mrs. Shaw's face.

"He gave it up—for her. He adored her. He did it willingly for her sake. He would have let himself be trampled by a herd of elephants if it would have done her any good. But—the call was never out of his ears. We used to talk it over by the hour. Could he ever go back, or couldn't he? I wanted him to go—oh, I urged him to go, wife or no wife. He should have gone. His heart was there. But—he stayed. For years I hated you, Mrs. Shaw. I used to wish you'd die—for then he could have gone back. But he stayed, and then—he died. And—the last time I talked to him—it was the evening before—he told me what I am going to tell you."

Eva Shaw looked at him apprehensively. "Don't tell me anything more just yet, Cobb," she said, her hands clasped tight. Then she added:

"All that you say is true. I remember his often saying he'd like to go back, but—I didn't know he really meant it. Just now I can't bear any more."

Cobb's eyes narrowed as if he were drawing a bead on some game bird on the verge of flight. "Cobb," he said to me as the sun went down, 'I have wasted

my life.' That's how he felt when he was dying."

She looked at him as a woman might look at her executioner, with dilated, shrinking eyes.

"He—he loved me," she stammered.

"I have wasted my life," returned the old man, as immovable as a statue of Buddha.

There was a long silence.

Then the executioner rose. "That's all. I know he was happy—in a way. I know that he adored you. But you made him waste his life. One life is enough for any woman to waste."

He went slowly out of the room and closed the door. Before the silence was again quite flawless, he opened the door.

"Shall I bring tea, Madam?" he asked.

VI

On the morning when Mr. and Mrs. James Singleton started for Capetown, several people came to the Charing Cross station to see them off.

Among others, were Mr. and Lady Lydia Brodrick, and the red-headed girl on whose fan Singleton had written his name on his first evening in England.

When the bride was settled comfortably in her carriage—the red-headed girl produced the same fan from her muff, and a fountain-pen from her bag.

"Please, Mrs. Shaw—I mean to say, Mrs. Singleton—write your name, too. Do you mind? You will soon be as great a celebrity as your husband, I am sure," she babbled on, as Mrs. Singleton did what she was asked. "Are you *really* going on some of his trips with him?"

Eva Singleton dropped her hands on the fan and looked up.

"I am going," she said, in a way the girl afterwards characterized as "too quaint," "to go with my husband wherever he will let me. His life work is mine."

Little Lady Lydia, who felt that she had made the match, kissed her cousin and his wife, and the others shook hands with the travelers.

In five minutes the train would start.

"Oh, Eva, you look so happy," Lady Lydia whispered.

"I am happy, Lydia—"

Suddenly the red-headed girl burst out laughing.

"Here's the Cardiff giant coming with a bouquet," she giggled.

"It's that absurd butler of yours, Eva," declared Hector Brodrick. "Surely you're not taking *him* with you to Africa?"

Cobb, in deliberate silence, laid his very beautiful flowers on the seat by the bride, and withdrew.

"Oh, no, we're not *taking* him," Sin-

gleton answered, "but—Eva, do you suppose—"

Forgetting everyone else, the newly married couple looked at each other for a moment and then burst into simultaneous peals of laughter.

"If he *does*," said Eva to her husband, "do you suppose he'll be a butler or—"

Before she finished speaking Cobb was at the carriage door.

"I will come to you at the steamer—at Dover," he said, adding with a great sigh of relief and resolution, "*Mrs. Singleton.*"

Around The Corner Primeval

BY MARGARET BURROUS MARTIN

IT was a successful dinner, as dinners go. Milton Sherdon had taken Elizabeth Caldwell in, thoroughly to his satisfaction.

Indeed it had become interestingly noticeable how many times, lately, Milton Sherdon's place-card adjoined that of Miss Caldwell's. Hostesses, in arranging their dinners, bracketed the two names with a sigh of relief and the words, "Well, that's easily settled." Mutual friends were beginning to wonder when it would be announced, and what in the world they could give them *different* for an engagement gift.

Sometimes, as Elizabeth Caldwell drowsily patted her fluffy pillows at night, she too wondered when it would be announced. She was sure of Milton Sherdon's love, sure, with the confidence born of his devotion of the past winter and of the less tangible but more comforting confidence her own heart gave her.

Yet she sometimes wondered why he had not spoken. It had occurred to her that his silence was due to their one marked divergence of taste—of temperament, perhaps. He was always talking about those queer people of the streets

and the slums and the tenements, in which he was so much interested. And as often she had had to confess her lack of enthusiasm on the subject. What had he and she in common with those dreadful people?

To-night at the dinner, as Sherdon's deep, dark eyes met hers while Judge Hampton was telling in his inimitable way of the pathos and humor in the testimony of the little Italian mother in that morning's court, his glance had seemed to challenge her sympathy in the pathetic tale and her heart confused her by its rapid throbs. After all, there was no one like Sherdon anywhere. Some time, some place—there, her heart was pounding in that absurd fashion again, as he began to speak. What was he saying?

"—spring in the air; over in the park the pussy willows were slipping off their cravettes and on Halsted Street the push-cart men were selling pine-apples and rhubarb."

How did he know, she interrupted him to ask, what they were doing over in Halsted Street? Oh, he went through there daily, he explained. It was only around the corner, as it were, from his

office and people *lived* over there. It was wonderful how responsive they were to everything. To-day every ragged boy on the street seemed to feel the spring, though there wasn't a tree or bird near to tell them. To-night the young girls in their tightest shoes and biggest hats would be walking the streets and sitting on the tenement steps with their lovers. Everybody ought to walk nights like to-night, spring nights. Would not she like to walk with him from this dinner to the dance they were going on to? After all it was just around the corner and spring was out to-night and he knew he could make it all right with her mother.

"Please," he pleaded. "Please." Was it only the walk the dark, clear eyes begged, she wondered, while again her heart pounded above the throbs of the orchestra discreetly distanced by the palm-hidden doors?

"Walk—walk to the Raymonds? What an idea! I never did such a thing."

Well, he protested, was she never going to do anything except what they, the circle around the table here, did day by day? "Spring is in the air," he cried. "Come out with me this first spring night." The deep eyes challenged the clear blue ones of the girl at his side as he voiced his unusual desire: "Let's get away from this, out into real life, under the spring sky. Just a little while away from the make-believe into the real. Just around the corner," he urged in broken sentences under cover of the dinner talk.

Spring was in the air—spring, and spring madness.

Elizabeth Caldwell, balancing unsteadily on slender feet shod in pumps which had proved their unfitness for street walking by shedding one absurdly elevated heel, agreed emphatically to the madness of this particular spring night. Indeed, as the pain of the slight wrench the crippled slipper had given her grew more insistent, she wondered if after all her mother was not justified in saying that Milton was a wee bit mad, Milton with his ever recurring interest in the queer people of Halsted Street

and other streets, unknown and unknowable to those of her kind. This street now! How foolish she had been to let him persuade her to walk out of their way to get nearer to where people recognized the spring. Recognized spring! She was cold. How far had they come? Gathering her all-enfolding satin coat more closely about her, she looked indignantly into the gray eyes bent most contritely above her.

"Where *are* we?" she asked, looking in dismay from the little church in whose shadow at her feet lay the delinquent, absurd little heel, to the only other public building in the block, a saloon, across the way.

"What will we do?" she continued. "I can't walk farther and there is no carriage near, and if there were I couldn't go to the dance now."

"Does the foot pain you very much? Of course, I will take you home at once. You will have to stay here until I run across the street and 'phone for a taxi' and to your mother. You will not mind waiting here? You are perfectly safe and you will not be alone. There is a couple just around the corner of those steps—see, there in the shadow. Perhaps you had better sit down on the steps. Intrude? Dear no, they are used to it. Girls from this neighborhood come to the street for the only privacy they can have! But if you prefer, stand right here. I will not be gone long."

A little uneasy, she moved uncertainly somewhat nearer the couple seated on the shadowed steps, as her newly humble escort hurried across the street. Curiously she glanced from the narrow-shouldered man on the steps to the broad figure outlined for a minute against the saloon's lighted window.

Left on the street after dark without an escort for the first time in the twenty years of her sheltered life, she found herself depending on the unknown stranger for protection against the possible dangers of the night.

What was he like, this narrow-shouldered fellow over there, around the corner of the steps? What was he saying? Oh, it was the girl that was speak-

ing. Conscious that she could hear what they said, she tapped the heel-less slipper on the walk and gave a warning cough. The girl on the step turned at the sound, but indifferently went on with her attentions to the man at her side.

"Aint it fine out to-night, Mr. Becker? It wont be long now till all the nights are like this. Gee! It was fierce down in the store to-day. I gotta notion to try for a place at the other five and ten. The china's upstairs there and the girls say it's awful where I am when it gets hotter."

Mr. Becker edged a little nearer the droopy hat and spoke swiftly:

"What'll I do then? Ah, say, Miss Babcock, you wont do that. Seems like I just wait all day till I gotta sweep up by your counter just to see you. Honest now, you aint thinking of going away? I got a chanct where I am. I'm going to get a raise next week. If it wasn't for mother and the kids, I'd—my mother's been awful good to me and the kids and it'll be three years before Bud can take my place, helpfng her. I wisht you knowed my mother. You're kinder like her, Miss Babcock, and your name is Elizabeth. I often wish I might call you that. Her name, it's that too, only my father he uster to call her Lizzie. Anybody call you that ever? I kinder like it—Lizzie."

Betty Caldwell smiled tolerantly at the pleading in the queer young fellow's deep voice. If it were not so absurd she would think there was something like Milton Sherdon in that voice.

How stupid the girl was. Didn't she know what he wanted to tell her, what he *was* telling her? Here she was talking about china and tin things! Why, the young man was trying to make love to her and by his voice he meant it. What did the tawdry girl expect? Was she entirely stupid?

Betty Caldwell's eyes widened under lifted brows as the girl leaned the least trifle nearer the man at her side and with an ungloved hand touched a long, flowing tie. "That's a swell tie you've got on, Phil. I'm crazy about that shade."

The little hand fingered the tie, while Betty Caldwell's lip curled with disdain; the young man sat motionless for a moment, then bent swiftly and kissed the full red lips under the droopy hat.

"You *do* like me," he panted. "You do like me. Tell me you do, Miss Babcock—Elizabeth—Lizzie! You'll *let* me call you that, I mean? You do like me more'n the other guys. Say you do. Honest, I just think about you all the time till it seems like I gotta have you. Oh Lord, I aint got nothing to offer you and you ought to have everything grand, but I just gotta have you. See!" He drew the yielding girl close to him and kissed her again and again.

"Say, it's something fierce the way it gets a fellow when he wants a girl like you. Gee, why don't you *tell* me you like me? We can't get married when mother needs me so much, not till Bud gets a-going anyhow, but we can be together like this out here. What's the matter? The weeps? Oh say, I didn't want to bother you. If I'm in wrong, just say the word, but Lord, seems like I gotta have you marry me some time. Can't you give me the word?"

The hand that still held the tie, faintly lavender in the street light, loosened its grasp. The droopy hat slipped rakishly over one ear as two rounded arms were flung around the bent neck above the narrow, boyish shoulders.

"I don't care if we can't get married right now; we can love each other and be together like this and know we like each other best of anything. And we've got plenty of time. I do like you best. You're so different from my other gentleman friends. I'm crying 'cause I'm so happy, that's all."

To the girl standing uneasily in the shadow of the little downtown church, the words and positions of the couple on the steps seemed part of a disconnected play on a far-off stage; and yet as she waited there, an unwilling, unresented eavesdropper, her heart beat even faster than at the table when the gray eyes she knew so well had sent their message into hers.

Stage! This was *real!* The girl there,

the little girl with the droopy hat, with her arms around the narrow-shouldered man, frankly indifferent to her solitary audience, was a girl, a girl like herself, and the lilt to her voice was wakened by joy, joy in the declared love of her lover.

The dinner that she had left back there—the beautiful table, the beautifully, no, the expensively gowned women, the servants moving so quietly to and fro, with blank, well-trained faces and silent tongues—there was the stage, while here almost at her feet was real life.

Why, oh why didn't Milton come back? But at that thought she felt she could not tell him about this wee glimpse into Eden. How many things she could not do! How many impulses she must crush, in her perfectly regulated world! What would happen if she got down off the stage and tried life? She dismissed the truant thought with a laugh that was half a sob and then saw the couple on the steps, whom she was watching with growing wonder at the *naïveté*, the almost offensive *insouciance* of their love making, draw sharply apart.

"That girl!" the narrow-shouldered youth was saying. "She's crying. What do you suppose that guy what made for the saloon is up to? I've got a mind to speak to her. Nobody sha'n't do nothing to no girl this night if I can queer it. Not when I'm so happy about your caring and all. When that guy comes out I'm going to keep my ears peeled and if he makes a fake start I'll wade into him."

The man's voice was held down to a hoarse whisper, but it carried easily to Elizabeth and with it came the astonishing conviction that the whispering, narrow-shouldered youth was referring to *her* when he spoke of "that girl!"—that on this, his hour of all glad hours, when love for the droopy little girl who babbled of chinas and tins in the "five and ten" made him defender of all girl-kind, he was prepared to "wade into" Milton Sheldon, left guard of his University and pet amateur boxer of the Athletic Club. Elizabeth Caldwell stifled

a laugh that was all a laugh as Milton's broad shoulders swung out of the door across the way. He crossed the street in surprisingly few strides and before Betty could altogether subdue the wonder and amusement in her eyes he stood before her.

"Was I gone a bally long time? I couldn't get the 'phone right away and then your mother was so distressed. Feared I was keeping something back from her. No wonder! I was a fool or worse to bring you this way. I guess the spring madness has got me."

He knelt quickly at her feet. "Your ankle—is it swelling? Does it pain you much? Perhaps I should bandage it."

As his fingers tenderly but clumsily enclosed her silk covered ankle, first the injured one and then the other for comparison, Betty realized that the pounding of her heart at the dinner table was nothing to the pace it was making now.

Finding the ankles of equally slender outline, Milton Sheldon rose to his feet with a sigh of relief and as his lips parted to reassure Elizabeth, the words, "Why he's all right," from the droopy little girl on the steps changed his remarks to a rather incoherent, "Eh, what!"

"Hush," whispered Elizabeth. "If you hadn't been you'd be 'waded into.' Oh, you don't understand, but they are such dears, such dears, those two around the corner."

Then the taxi' came and when the twisted ankle brought a little cry of pain from Elizabeth as she stepped into its shelter, Milton Sheldon's sympathy loosed his guarded tongue.

"Oh, Miss Caldwell, Elizabeth, Betty, *Betty!*—That's what I think! I wonder if I can ever call you that! I didn't mean to tell you, but I can't keep it back, since, like a fool, just to have you these few minutes to myself, I have *hurt* you. *Betty!* *Betty!* Sometimes it seems as if I *must* have you and then I remember what you have, your home and all. It would be long before I could do for you what your father does, *three years* at least."

A sob that was more than half a

laugh burst from Betty's lips, and then another and another.

Milton Sheldon grew white; then he said slowly: "I did not realize I was a joke to you. I—I am sure I beg your pardon."

Betty's eyes fell from the deep gray eyes with their awful hurt, to the lips drawn so straight above the square white chin. Milton's lips had never looked that way before. Milton's lips—With a laugh that was more than half a sob, she reached one little hand up—That other foolish man, the man on the steps back there had a *long* tie on. It would be easier if this tie were longer; but slowly, while the little sobbing laugh came again and again, Elizabeth Caldwell, most conventional, most correct girl of her correct set, reached a trembling hand up to the little bow tie and catching its narrow white edge, she whispered with her eyes averted to the floor of the taxi:

"That's a—a swell tie you have on—Milt. I'm—I'm *crazy* about that shade."

For a full minute Milton Sheldon sat perfectly rigid and then as the little hand at his throat wavered and started a pitiful retreat, hand and girl were crushed against the broad chest.

"Betty! Betty! What do you mean! Betty, my girl," he whispered hoarsely. "You *care*, you really care more for me than for any of them? Betty, you do care. Oh, I'm afraid I'll hurt you. Don't let me hurt you, dear. I've wanted you so. I can't let you go. Don't struggle, dear. Do you know, do you know how it is when a man loves as I love you? Little girl, Betty, tell me, tell me you care."

Betty tried ineffectually to push away from the encircling arms and bent head.

"How," she gasped, "can I—tell you—anything—when you—kiss me—all the time?"

The Love Record

BY BARTON WOOD CURRIE

Author of "Si Bee's Circumstantial Whiskers," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY F. E. FOLLIN

THE narrow room back of the Finville post office, which served as Justice of the Peace Jedediah Worme's tribunal, was the scene of strenuous turmoil as the hour approached for the arraignment of Percy Dingle. Only Justice Worme, Constable Pickett, the accused, the Brewerton widder and the immediate members of the Stave family had any inkling of the exact nature of the charge. The accused had been served with the warrant at the Holcomb canning factory at Brewerton. His boss furnished bail after a sharp colloquy with Constable Pickett and Noah Stave, who had driven Pickett over to Brewerton in his own rig.

How Miranda, Patience, Sally Ann,

Amelia and Gladys Stave managed to remain mum in view of their reputation for untrammeled speech was a psychologic marvel that baffled their fellow members in the women's chapter of the North Star lodge. The raciest sort of rumors were afloat, and the stolid, slow-going Percy Dingle was pictured as a variety of monsters which the primitive mind dared not contemplate.

The men in the village had bought cigars and drinks for Constable Pickett with a prodigality only possible because of the burning interest of their wives in the mystery. The customarily grim and taciturn Finville police force had left Tom Leney's bar on more than one evening in a state of orchestral mellowness,

but his cumulative libations seemed rather to make him a master of evasiveness than reduce him to that state of crapulous frankness that had been counted on.

Mrs. Hannah Dingle had promised the woman's auxiliary of the Stone Hollow Baptist Church to compel her husband Dan'l to journey to Brewerton and wring the truth from his brother. Mrs. Dingle's husband had failed miserably in the mission, his kinsman informing him in his slow, emphatic way that if Hannah Dingle was keen to know the facts she had better ask "them Stave girls."

"If I open my mouth to you, Dan'l, an' you take back a single fact o' truth to that wife o' yours, she'd twist it into more lies nor Ananias an' Sapphira could sing a duet onto, an' she'd do it in less time nor it'd take a turtle to snap a hummin' bug."

Dan'l Dingle did not report his brother's language to his capable, athletic spouse until frankness was literally dragged out of him. When he felt that his left ear could no longer stand the strain he capitulated, promising to repeat word for word what Percy had said if he were permitted first to row a little way out on Oneida Lake and talk across an intervening space of water.

Somewhat exhausted by her exertions and still consumed with curiosity, Hannah Dingle consented to this arrangement and accompanied her husband to the shingle beach at the foot of the pasture. In undignified haste Dan'l scrambled into his skiff and paddled out a dozen yards from shore. Then laying back his oars so that the blades gripped the water he repeated what Percy had said. As he gasped out the last word he threw his whole weight on the oars and pulled mightily. Only one missile reached the boat, a large, flat stone that impinged harmlessly against one of the flying oars.

This dramatic episode in the life of the Dan'l Dingles seemed utterly forgotten as they fought their way shoulder to shoulder to the foot of the cellar stairway by which the mob gained en-

trance to the Finville tribunal. The one door letting into the rear from the ground level was reserved exclusively for the entrance and exit of Justice Worme. Not even the parties to a civil suit or criminal proceeding were permitted ingress or egress save *via* the cellarway under the post office. Postmaster Ben Allen refused to allow his combination drug store, hardware shop, undertaking establishment and post office to serve as a lobby to the court; wherefore he had built a solid wall against the courtroom. Jedediah Worme fiercely maintained the dignity of the ermine by preëmpting for his exclusive use the narrow rear door that faced on Screiba Lane.

Bailiff Jim Beebe, the stalwart village blacksmith, presided at the trap-door that opened upon the steep cellarway. With his long tipstaff he discouraged the juvenile element from mounting into the courtroom. Now and then an adult got a crack with the long hickory rod, but such affronts were swiftly appeased by assigning the victim to a seat on one of the third or fourth row benches. The front row was invariably reserved for litigants and witnesses. The Joneses, the Wellses and the Buells, being horse owners and steady patrons of the bailiff, generally filled the second row, and on the great day in question they had come in force and early enough to avoid the rush.

So had two score others and by the time Hannah and Dan'l Dingle had fought their way to the foot of the stairway, Jim Beebe was almost beside himself. Every bench was filled save the side bench to the right of the bar of justice, where prisoners were isolated. It was a bare-faced contempt of court for a spectator to sit upon this bench and there were few Finvillians, male or female, who had ever possessed the temerity to offend Justice Worme and risk the ignominy and expense of being publicly fined. Consequently, when the abundant red hair and the broad shoulders of Hannah Dingle shot into view below him, Bailiff Beebe called down:

"Standin' room only, Hannah Dingle, an' on'y six kin stand."



He repeated what Percy had said

Mrs. Dingle ignored the warning and grasping Dan'l firmly by the belt and collar she scaled the ladder with surprising vigor for a woman of her weight. Having shot Dan'l into the room, she bounded in herself. With a hawk-like scrutiny she swept the seven rows of benches that faced the gavel-battered table at which Justice of the Peace Worme presided. She measured every possible inch of crowding room and saw that only by the employment of hydraulic pressure could the narrowest sort of person be crowded in. Suddenly her gaze traveled to the empty bench reserved for prisoners. Without a word she grasped her husband by the arm and marched to the forbidden bench. Bailiff Beebe rushed forward to intercept her, but she beat him to it by the margin of a yard and planked herself down, grasping Dan'l firmly beside her.

"Contempt or no contempt o' court," she flung back at the blustering bailiff, "I aint goin' to get off this bench. If there aint no man in this court what has manners an' etiquette ernuff to get up an' give a lady his seat, it's up to Jedge Worme to make 'em, an' I'll tell that to

Jedediah Worme to his teeth. As for Dan'l, he's own brother o' Percy Dingle an' his place is 'longside his kin no matter how guilty he is o' whatever crime." Mrs. Dingle now shifted her belligerent gaze from Jim Beebe to the front bench that contained the pale and silent members of the Stave family.

Further argument was impossible for the bailiff in view of the geyser-like spouting into the courtroom of old and young. There were twenty-two persons standing when he finally managed to batten down the hatchway and plant himself upon the writhing and groaning timbers. Nor had Court or prisoner yet arrived.

Constable Pickett stood on guard outside the magistrate's private entrance, prepared to signal across lots to His Honor when the bailiff had secured the trap-door—that ceremony ordinarily occurring after all the litigants had assembled. Seeing the bailiff standing over the trap-door and herding back the standees with his tipstaff, Pickett waved his arm.

Slowly and impressively, with his precious law library, "The Homemade

Lawyer," tucked under his arm, Justice Worme crossed lots. The courtroom throng could see him coming and the already great tension that racked them and gave them somewhat the appearance of tortured dummies increased to a strain that made their eyes bulge alarmingly. A whistling exclamation burst from them when they saw a two-horse surrey dash down Screiba Lane and pull up sharply at the opening in the fence. His Honor, the Court, had just passed through. Three persons quickly descended from the vehicle.

"Percy Dingle an' ly-yer Walt Hawkins!" exclaimed the venerable Caleb Jones, shrilly.

"An' a strange female," cackled Mrs. Caleb Jones.

"The Brewerton widder!" gasped fifty voices, and had it not been for the restraining hand of his granddaughter, Liza Jones, Caleb Jones, Sr., would have sprung to the window to look and thereby lost a coveted aisle seat in the third row.

In view of their anguished curiosity it was astonishing how the seated spectators clung to their places. Witness Peter Scales, alone of all the assemblage, appeared calm and in full control of his emotions. He looked about him with a sparkling eye and under the curls of his bushy beard he was grinning and chuckling in huge delight.

Alongside the happy fish pirate wriggled and writhed Noah Stave, his pulse beating above 100, his brain on fire with eagerness and his feet locked in a vise-like grip upon a long, oblong box. Patience Stave, who in many prominent features resembled her father, seemed to be passing in and out of swoons, the process being regulated by the vigor with which her five sisters fanned her. The mysterious, oblong box and Miss Stave's series of fainting spells were enough in themselves to suggest the heights of sensationalism. The possible appearance of the Brewerton widder had not occurred to the wildest fancy.

Considering the alleged great power of mind over matter it was surprising that the rear door of the courtroom was

not ripped from its hinges to reveal Patience Stave's successful rival. Three score throbbing consciousnesses willed that door to burst open, but it stubbornly resisted until Justice Worme ha' been utterly routed in his argument to preserve the sanctity of his private portal. Unseeing, the listeners could hear His Honor laying down the law with caustic phrase. "No Syracuse ly-yer could dictate to him how to run his court," and so on until he had worked himself up into a boiling passion.

Suddenly a sharp, shrill note smote the air—a distinctly feminine note that caused more than one sensitive male in the packed courtroom to quail.

"P. Dingle an' I are going into that door, Jedge or no Jedge. Cellars was made fer rats. If Finville folks wanter be trod under ground, let 'em. *Let 'em!* Do you hear me?"

The tremulous fumbling of the padlock on the door was Jedediah Worme's only audible reply, and while those inside held their breath in stifled apprehension the door crashed open and the Brewerton widder swept in with Percy Dingle at her heels, drawn along in her wake much as a meteor attaches itself to a comet—by negative resistance.

Justice Worme, black with impotent rage and not entirely free from symptoms of panic, followed the defendant, passed her, flung "The Homemade Lawyer" upon the bench and snapped up the ponderous gavel from its hook. Once seized of this scepter of office he was made whole again and his characteristic fierceness returned upon him as a cloak of armor. His eye fell upon Hannah Dingle and the gavel crashed down.

"Jim Beebe," shouted the magistrate, "clear the pris'ner's bench. My orders is goin' to be obeyed into this court if I have to hire eight constables an' eleven bailiffs to do it. Madam"—swinging round on the tall, deep-chested young woman who had routed him at the door—"you kin sit on the pris'ner's bench with the pris'ner or you kin stand. I aint partikeler."

The Brewerton widder's round face,

with its full, red lips and rosy cheeks, wore a scornful smile as she led the way to the bench which Hannah and Dan'l Dingle had abandoned as if it had become a red-hot grill. The Brewerton widder was the only woman present in a silk dress and plumed hat and as she walked her fine raiment crinkled and crackled at every step. Still more startling, however, Percy Dingle was attired in a broadcloth frock-coat, black and white checked trousers, patent leather shoes and a fashionably high collar that made his eyes bulge. He carried a silk hat in his white-gloved hands. There was a carnation in his buttonhole and a shiny watch-chain draped across his white pique waistcoat. His own brother regarded him in baffled wonder, as if only vaguely convinced of his identity.

The Brewerton widder was still smiling with a mixture of self-assurance and scorn as she spread her silk skirt on the prisoner's bench, leaving just enough room for the accused to let himself down upon, and when Foreman Dingle of the Holcomb Canning Co., Ltd., sat down, he accomplished the descent in a series of agonized jerks, owing to the parsimony of material in his nether garments. He knew every man, woman and child in the audience, but he avoided their eyes as if they were so many wasps ready to pounce and sting—an utterly absurd assumption, for every eye that regarded him seemed frozen in its socket, not excepting the eyes of Noah Stave and the Misses Stave.

"Open the court, accordin' to law!" thundered Justice Worme when the Brewerton widder and Percy Dingle were seated and Constable Pickett had fastened the rear door with its padlock.

"Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye!" intoned Bailiff Beebe, pounding his tipstaff. "Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye!" (For the life of him he could not remember the rest of it and he let his voice die away in an incoherent rumble.)

"Stand up, pris'ner, an' hear the charge ag'in you!" was the next ferocious command from the bench and with a swift double-hinge movement Percy

Dingle stood up. As he did so, Walter Hawkins, the young Syracuse attorney, stepped jauntily around from the rear of the bench, where he had paused in the background to study the entralling scene with a pair of calm gray eyes that held bubbling laughter in their depths.

Justice Worme could not restrain a savage snort when the young man came into view and stood in an easy attitude of solemn expectancy before the bench. He was the picture of deference and composure, and so coolly confident in his bearing that Noah Stave felt his spine turning to ice. His daughters were differently affected, regarding the good looking attorney with expressions of undisguised admiration not untainted with wistful longing. Whenever his gaze wandered in their direction their sallow cheeks caught fire and their eyes swam.

"The charge ag'in the pris'ner at the bar, Percy Dingle, o' the township o' Finville, o' the County o' Oswego, o' the State o' New York, U. S. A.," volleyed Justice Worme when he had opened "The Homemade Lawyer" and snapped on his specs, "is obtainin' the valyerable property o' one setter dog from Patience Henrietta Stave under false an' fraudulent pretensions; them false and fraudulent pretensions bein' a promise o' marriage he made to her on the arternoon o' June 11 jest recent past. Pris'ner, are you guilty or not guilty? Raise your right hand an' swear onto your guilt."

The Brewerton widder was on her feet in a bound. In a voice vibrating with passion she cried:

"Not guilty! It's a robbin', black-mailin' plot an' conspiracy an' our ly-er 'll prove it."

Justice Worme's gavel came down with the emphasis of a thunderclap. The Brewerton widder sat down in pale alarm, for the fury depicted on the Court's countenance was even too much for her exalted heroism. Percy Dingle dropped his silk hat and would gladly have dropped himself had his skin-tight small-clothes permitted it. Walter Hawkins was the first to break the awful silence that succeeded the crash of the gavel.

"You will have to pardon Mrs. Dingle," he began gently. "She—" But a shrill scream caused another sensational break in the proceedings and threw the courtroom into an uproar. Patience Stave had swooned and lay rigid on the floor at the feet of the terrified prisoner.

Attorney Hawkins stepped swiftly to the side of the stricken Miss Stave and lifted her in his arms. She revived with a low moan and began sobbing softly, in which pathetic state she was restored to the arms of her two elder sisters, who patted and comforted her while they glared at the Brewerton widder. Sympathetic "Ohs!" and "Ahs!" were breathed from every corner of the room until Justice Worme rose suddenly from his chair and addressed the father of the distressed young woman.

"Noah Stave, if you an' your family is goin' on with this case you got to keep that gal o' yours from faintin', nat'ral or special. The pris'ner at the bar has got his rights an' this court is goin' to

see 'em upheld reg'lar an' legal. The next time that gal faints on or off the floor, or makes a sobbin' sound afore she's called on to testify, the Court'll throw the hull complaint clear out an' tax you with all the costs an' charges. An' as for you, Jim Beebe, there's got to be silence total an' complete into this treebunal, an' if there aint, clear out the room an' we'll hold this hearin' private. Now, Noah Stave, is this faintin' business goin' to stop?"

"A gal can't help havin' feelin's," complained Mr. Stave angrily.

"Feelin's an' faintin's is two different things," retorted the magistrate. "Patience Stave can have all the feelin's she wants into this courtroom, but she's got to do her faintin's to home."

"I reckon she hears you, Jedge," stammered Mr. Stave. "There wont be no more interruptings o' that sort," he added in a voice that seemed to have an electrifying effect upon his daughter, who sat up stiffly in tragic resignation.

"She'll be ready to testify whenever you say the word."

"All right then," growled the Court, and turning to Attorney Hawkins, while at the same time he covered the Brewerton widder with a threatening eye, he demanded:

"Now, what's your plea for the pris'ner? You don't need to put in none if your client 'll plead guilty an' produce that setter pup. I'm not tryin' any breach o' promise case into this court, 'cause I know the law as it's writ into the statchute books an' in this here last edition o' 'The Homemade Ly-yer.' The on'y special an' partikeler charge ag'in the pris'-



Slowly and Impressively Justice Worme crossed lots.

ner is obtainin' one dog from Neah Stave's daughter on a lyin' promise o' marriage, the same bein' the crime o' petty larceny. If I hold Percy Dingle on that charge he goes to trial in the County Court in Oswego, an' the chances are they'll soak him good."

As Justice Worme delivered this ultimatum he began to glow with enthusiasm. The extent of his legal knowledge surprised himself and acted upon him as a pleasing stimulant. It delighted him further to note the pallor deepen on the long, lean face of the accused and to see his knees tremble. Nor was there any ruddy glow left in the buxom face of the Brewerton widder. Only the young Syracuse lawyer remained unmoved by the Court's eloquence. His calmness and the inscrutable smile that played about his lips was all that prevented the Finville jurist from sitting back and enjoying to the full a moment of unalloyed triumph. When the young man spoke in a soft, easy drawl Justice Worme's frown returned and he tightened his grip on the gavel.

"Of course," said Walter Hawkins, "we have no thought of entering a plea of guilty. Neither will we consider compromise or settlement. With all due respect for the tender feelings of the complainant, she is vastly in error, possibly through ill advice, in presuming that her complaint constitutes a criminal cause of action against Mr. Dingle. He assures me that never in his wildest flights of fancy did he aspire to the honor of leading Miss Patience Stave to the hymenial altar. As for the dog in issue—but we will dispose of that in due time. It is not necessary for us to show our hand before it is called."

"We'll call it all right, by ding!" ejaculated Noah Stave, leaping up and waving his arms. "I got the proof right



"P. Dingle an' I are going into that door"

here into this box, Jedge Worme, an' if Percy Dingle's got the gall to swear ag'in his own livin' word we got him fer perjurin' as well as dog stealin', an'—"

"Bang!" impinged the gavel again. "Sit down, Noah Stave," the Court snorted. "When you're called on to open your mouth in this proceeding, the Court'll call you reg'lar. You're on'y a witness in this hearin'. Your daughter's the party o' the first part in partikeler. Patience Stave, take the witness chair an' sit up tight like you had a backbone."

With a pathetic effort the young woman managed to get on her feet and walk unassisted to the rickety chair beside the Court's desk. As Justice Worme administered the oath she wiped away a tear from one of her pale blue eyes and uttered a long, hissing sigh. A terrible look from the bench stifled any further expression of emotion at that juncture.



The Joneses, the Wellses and the Buells had come early to avoid the rush

"Patience Stave," began the magistrate, in a tone that was more accusing than encouraging, "did you give Percy Dingle, the pris'ner at the bar, a brindle setter pup which is described into this complaint over your handwriting signature? Answer me, yes or no, an' answer me so the hull o' this pop-eyed audience kin hear you."

"Y-y-y-y-y-yes, I g-g-g-g-gave—"

"Yes or no, I told you. You're under oath an' you got to be brief as tacks with a ly-er here layin' fer you like a lynx."

"Y-y-y-yes," sniveled the witness.

"The pris'ner, Percy Dingle, asked you fer that dog?"

"Yes, sir; my pore Carlo—"

"An' afore he asks you fer that dog, he worms a promise o' marriage out o' you. Stop chokin' an' answer me sharp."

"H-h-h-he, he, t-t-t—"

"Yes or no, an' stop snivelin'."

"Y-y-y-yes."

"An' you promised to marry him?"

"N-n-n-n-not in w-w-w-words," moaned the witness, "b-b-but—"

"Yes or no, an' stop that there stut-terin'." Justice Worme seemed obsessed with the idea that the more relentless his handling of the distraught witness the less likelihood of an emotional breakdown. Attorney Hawkins came to Miss

Stave's assistance in a manner that won him a black look from his client's bride.

"Justice Worme," he said, sternly, "your examination of the witness is positively brutal. I venture to advise that if you permit her to answer in her own way she will tell the truth in so far as her memory serves her. Mr. Dingle assures me that he has not the least fear of the truth, and certainly I have no wish to take advantage of any little break she may make. Now, Miss Stave, tell us just what you said on the occasion you imagined the defendant to ask you for your hand in marriage."

"I-I-I-I-I-I-I d-d-d-d-d-didn't s-s-s-say, I—" but the strain was too much and the young woman buried her crimson face in her handkerchief and sobbed hysterically.

"Play actin'," sniffed the Brewerton widder in accents that rang with scorn.

"Play actin', eh!" exploded the Court, who had been groping for a crushing rejoinder to Attorney Hawkins. "Play actin'!" he shouted as he leveled his gavel at the prisoner's silk-gowned bride. "Ask that there chalk-faced clothes-pole of a Percy Dingle you roped into marryin' you afore your first husband, Andy Barrell, was settled decent in his grave, if he were play actin' when he kissed an'

hugged this here innercent, delusioned gal onto her own father's porch. You got a play actor onto your hands, I calkerlate, which you better chain up in your back yard along o' that setter pup he got by his lyin' fraud an' deceit."

The Brewerton widder did not flinch.

"Lies! All lies!" she retorted shrilly. "I'll take Percy Dingle's word ag'in the hull kit an' crew o' Finville."

"You'll take his word, will you?" fumed Justice Worme.

"We got it for her! We got it for her!" Noah Stave was on his feet again, making frantic gestures to the Court to indicate the mysterious box wedged between his feet. Justice Worme suspended the descent of his gavel in mid air; his glance flashed upon the long, oblong box and then back upon the defiant Brewerton widder. Suddenly his countenance almost relaxed and he dropped his voice to a low, menacing pitch.

"Yes, we got it for you, Mrs. Whatever-your-name-is, an' afore we get through with this case we'll give you more o' Percy Dingle's word an' voice nor you'll admire to hear. Patience Stave, go back to your women-folks an' let your father hoist that there phonygraph into the witness chair."

"What's all this?" interposed the defendant's counsel, who was no less mystified than the great body of the thrilled and stupefied spectators. It was a dear moment to Justice Worme to look down on the suave and confident young lawyer with an eye of superior knowledge, and his voice was almost purring as he said:

"That there box is the chief witness ag'in' Percy Dingle. It's a phonygraph out o' which you'll hear Percy Dingle's own livin' voice mumblin' words o'

love to that pore gal who's been weepin' an' faintin' into this court. This widder-bride he's brought along with him wont listen to nothin' but his voice, she says, an' now we're goin' to give it to her. Brace up, Patience, there's a good gal; the laugh o' scorn is goin' to be onto the other face afore my watch beats off eighty seconds. Play that there love record, Noah Stave, an' the man or woman what breaks in by so much as gurglin' is fined ten dollars cash for contempt o' court."

With a trembling but nevertheless practiced hand, Noah Stave set up the phonograph on the witness chair and slipped on the single record that the box contained. He adjusted the horn so as to take in the bench, the prisoner, the Brewerton widder—who, despite the sneer that wreathed her lips, was palpably impressed—and the members of the Stave family. As Mr. Stave wound up the machine, the entire courtroom



- H. E. FOLLIN -

"He kissed this here innercent, delusioned gal!"

throng, possibly excepting Walter Hawkins, Justice Worme, Constable Pickett and Peter Scales, seemed to undergo a mysterious wrenching as if their own internal machinery were being rent and twisted. When all was ready, the father of the Stave girls turned his flushed and eager face to the magistrate.

"Let her go," said His Honor hoarsely, and Mr. Stave let her go.

It was not a new machine and some of its wheels were loose. It had reached the Stave family via Syracuse, Utica, Oneida and Bird's Neck, various relatives passing it along as they tired of it or replaced it by something more modern. The mystery of how it was cocked and set to catch the alleged wooing of Percy Dingle did not develop. It was patent to the dullest mental process that if Percy and Patience had failed to hear it strive to record their tender dialogue they must have been terrifically absorbed.

Beginning with a two-minute wheeze the record suddenly uttered a sibilant squeak that put Justice Worme's teeth on edge and caused half of the courtroom throng to lick their lips. Noah Stave was bent over the instrument prying into the machinery as if he were looking for a mote in a watch. Suddenly the machine broke out with:

"Take my darling Carlo, Percy, he—" But the spectators were just rising to the sensation when there was another cross-circuit interjection and more grinding and scraping that caused His



"Judge," she said "I've been deceived"

—T. E. FOLLIN—

Honor to turn upon Noah Stave with a murderous glare in his eyes. The father of the Stave girls was fairly dripping perspiration and jumped back just in time to permit the ancient talking machine to hurl its one complete sensation into the spellbound assemblage — to wit:

"Patience, dolling, gimme another little smack-lum—your lips is cherry sweet—B-z-z-z-z-z-z—"

"It'll buzz fer two minutes, Jedge Worme," shrilled Mr. Stave, "an' that buzzin' is ever-

dence o' kissin', which my daughter'll swear onto ag'in her will. She—" At this crucial moment something in the overwrought instrument exploded and the love record parted in a thousand pieces, one piece impinging upon the point of His Honor's jaw.

"It's been loaded onto me," wailed Noah Stave. "There's been treachery an' dynamite brought into this here box."

"Treachery nothin'! The spring's busted!" The Brewerton widder was on her feet. She had risen a moment before, pale as ashes, her lips trembling, but her eyes fixed on Percy Dingle with feline watchfulness. At the very first articulation of his voice by the phonograph he had begun to sidle toward the open window, moving inch by inch with an imperceptible, gliding motion. Just as the machine exploded, his surreptitious progress toward the window was arrested by the sudden seizure of his arm below the elbow.

The hapless bridegroom winced, but

did not move; neither did his hopeless waiting-for-the-axe expression alter as the widder's grip tightened. Even Justice Worme was spellbound by the dramatic intensity of the situation and let down his gavel—which had almost flown from his hand at Noah Stave when the fragment of the love record smote him. When the Brewerton widder began to speak in the ghost of her former resonant voice, the stillness in the courtroom became a palpable weight.

"Jedge," she said, swaying slightly, "I've been deceived. He's guilty as cats o' all the charges you read out on him. Them words o' his that come out o' that machine was identical the words he used onto my own porch, on'y I, I"—fiercely repressing a sob—"believed he was talkin' out o' his heart. I was deceived jest like this pore gal here an' he might've acted similar to me if I hadn't run him down to the town clerk an' got a license afore he could cool off an' change his mind. Men is scarce in these parts, Jedge Worme. Earnin' men is scarcer 'n two-headed rabbits, an' a widder's lonely.

"But what I got, I got to keep. If you send him to jail an'"—more fiercely—"most jails is too dinged good for him, I'll be waitin' at the door when he comes out. I'm sentenced to this here specimen o' man critter for life. Go on, Jedge! Don't show no mercy on him on my account." The Brewerton widder shut her eyes and bowed her head, but her grip on her bridegroom's arm remained inflexible.

For several moments Justice Worme swallowed hard and blinked his eyes. His glance steadied as it took in the tragic figure of Percy Dingle and his widder-bride. Suddenly His Honor burst out:

"Jim Beebe, clear the courtroom. This here hearin's over. The pris'ner's proved guilty an' the sentence o' the Court is that he keep that petty larceny setter pup as a remembrance o' what a low-down cuss he's been. I calkerlate his heart-breakin' days is over. Noah Stave, sweep up that busted phonygraph off o' my courtroom floor. Court is adjined siney die: I'm a-goin' fishin'."



"I calkerlate his heart-breakin' days is over"

The Dragon

BY GEORGE HIBBARD

Author of "The Raft," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAWRENCE HERNDON

WHEN he was a little boy he chanced upon a book in the library. It was on the top shelf, where interesting books are likely to be. If, later in life, he had thought of this, he might have considered the fact suggestive, significant and symbolical, almost all really desirable things being—on the top shelf. Howbeit, he ensconced himself in a deep chair and turning the leaves of the volume, came at once upon the picture of a monster such as the "Natural History" in the nursery did not contain.

The creature stretched lengthily down a precipitous path leading from a castle—with which structure it apparently held some business connection. The beast, having an enormous mouth wherefrom unquestionably issued tongues of flame and clouds of smoke, extended along the way in complicated convolutions of a tail with so many twists and coils as to be almost curly. On its squat fore legs it barred the road before a comparatively diminutive man mounted upon a correspondingly minute steed, who was strangely clad and bore a long pole from which fluttered a banner, while the horse carried more harness than any he had ever beheld. Indeed it was a marvelous world upon which he opened that rainy, autumn afternoon.

He pondered much upon it, for the land portrayed with such careful accuracy appeared a very attractive place. Anon came the great news that the region of the Dragon—he learned to read and found out the name—never existed at all. This was a very great shock, since he had become accustomed to accepting the knight and fair ladies, the ogres and imps, the enchanted woods and the stately palaces as very much belonging

to the established order of things. Really, to have a whole continent erased from the map was a catastrophe which might carry consternation to anybody. And the Dragon—the Dragon had exercised a powerful fascination from the first. The earth must be much tamer and life a much more insipid affair when there were none such to be found and fought.

"What are you reading about?" some one once asked him.

"Dragons," he replied.

"But there aren't any."

"No," he admitted slowly. "I don't suppose there are."

"What's the use of reading about what there isn't?"

He shook his head helplessly, unable to make an answer.

Then he grew up and the immediate world closed upon him. When he received his diploma of admission to the Bar—the diploma fastened with red ribbon and put away beside his college "sheepskin" tied with blue—he decided to start for himself. He had saved something and with frugality he believed that he could meet expenses for a year. Accordingly he had his name painted upon the big marble entablature on the wall of the ground floor corridor of the Maynard Building, the tallest skyscraper in Oschigo, and on the glass of a door on a floor far above.

This door he opened one day when the period of courtier to Fortune, of waiting for clients, had endured for some time. He came out at exactly the same moment that the door of the main office of the Oschigo Roofing Company across the hall was swiftly closed. A girl appeared. She seemed in a hurry, for

while she stuck one hat pin in her hat, she held the other between her small, white teeth. Observing him, she fell into slight confusion at discovery in such a state of unpreparedness. Next she was lost in an unconsciousness which excluded the universe.

Instantly, but with a certitude which led him to feel that he would never re-cede a particle from the momentous conclusion, he decided that she was the prettiest girl he had ever seen. Together they stood before the grille of the elevator and with his heart beating, he hazarded a temerarious remark.

"An elevator never comes when one wants it."

"It's worse than the watched tea-pot which never boils," she replied impulsively. "And when one is late—"

She checked herself as if she regretted saying so much. At once he accused himself in having offended her by an overboldness; all of the evening at his boarding house he was troubled about it.

However, patience in a perfectly formal bearing and perseverance in saying an expressionless "good-morning," conquered a ceremonious recognition. By degrees she consented to talk with him for a moment. They often met in the elevator, for she was, as he quickly found, the stenographer and typist of the Oschigo Roofing Company. After three months had gone, she received him one memorable evening at the house where she lodged. Even this was hardly satisfactory. Every other inmate of the place apparently made a point of passing the drawing-room door and looking in. Moreover, one feminine dweller beneath the roof planted herself early and firmly in a chair behind an evening newspaper—in the contents of which she might or might not have been absorbed.

Upon one occasion at the very beginning of spring he recklessly asked her if she would not some time walk in the park with him.

"I could get off for an afternoon," she admitted slowly and concluded rapidly and resolutely, "I will."

When the May sky was the bluest and a light, frisksome breeze seemed bearing

summer with it, they went upon their expedition. The branches were delicately fringed with the first, palest green. In the grass the bright, tender shoots had begun to start up and all about were birds occupied actively and alertly with the pressing interests of housebuilding. Few people were there so early in the season, and soon they found a bench in an absolutely deserted corner surrounded by budding bushes and opening upon the sparkling lake.

They were silent and they talked of many things. In the informality of their chatter she even vaunted the glories of a new spring frock. Confidences and confidence had gone so far that she showed him a "sample" in her purse. As she was closing the *porte-monnaie* a coin slipped from it and fell in her lap.

"Oh," she cried, "I have that for luck." She held it out to him and explained. "It's an old, old English piece. There is a tradition in the family that the first of us who came, years and years ago, brought it and it has been a kind of a little heirloom. Not that it has the least value. Only it was called the 'lucky penny' and I inherited it."

He took the coin, which had the absorbing interest of anything in the least connected with her. He looked at it, turned it over and laughed. On the obverse was represented a man on a rearing charger trampling upon a threatening monster through which the rider at the same time thrust a lance.

"Why do you laugh?" she asked in surprise.

"My old friend the Dragon," he answered.

"Really?" she returned mockingly. "Do you mean this particular dragon, or just dragons in general?"

"Dragons," he answered gravely. "A dragon once held a very important part in my life. At that time I believed that they really existed—particularly one very large, powerful, fierce dragon that lived before a great castle."

"I know," she said, nodding. "When you were little."

"It was a great disappointment and trial to me when I discovered there

weren't any. You see, I had planned to be the hero of such exploits and do such very brave and brilliant things with them."

"Fight them, you mean," she demanded earnestly.

"Yes," he replied, laughing, "and now I haven't a chance."

"I believe that you would fight—have fought one," she said, looking at him for a moment very earnestly and the next looking away very quickly.

"What makes you think that?" he demanded, leaning forward.

"Because—" She stopped.

"Yes?"

"Oh—"

"What?"

"Why—"

"Please!"

"Really—"

"Indeed—"

"But—"

"Come?"

"Then—"

"Well—"

"Nothing," she cried, ending the explicit dialogue by springing swiftly to her feet. "It is getting horribly late. We must go."

They turned back toward the park gate and the trolley. The sun was setting, but with a resplendence which clearly it had never attained before in all its centuries of effort. There were clouds here and there, but they were the lightest, fleeciest drifting things and each was of the brightest and tenderest rose. A robin sang with a gaiety of confidence. Afar, off in the warm, purple haze, the electric lights of the city street shone gem-like and magical.

Immediately he began to consider the practical problem of whether he could provide a Princess, who happened in some marvelous manner to be in this work-a-day world, with cloth of gold to wear and nightingales' tongues on which to feast—for nothing else would be fitting. Barring this, could he supply her with rain-coats and overshoes and bread and butter? His practice was increasing. An important bank, the president of which recollected many good dinners

at his father's table, gave him a number of cases. A prominent lawyer, also an old family friend, frequently threw odds and ends in his way. And he had Mr. "Lem" Mosby.

He laughed as he thought of his one *bona fide* client.

Approving of his conduct of the defense of a case in the Municipal Court, Mr. "Lem" Mosby had sought him in quest of legal services. An action against a pawnbroker to replevin goods wrongfully held was followed by litigation concerning a small promissory note. Pending the argument of constitutional questions in the Supreme Court of the United States, he did not feel justified in refusing these opportunities of earning a fee.

The course of the legal procedure frequently brought Mosby to consult him. Therefore he was not surprised when one afternoon, returning from a neighboring office where he had gone for a few moments, he met his client in the corridor.

"I've been robbed," announced Mr. Mosby, when he was seated in a chair. He always spoke in a husky whisper as if having a bad cold, and now wheezed out the information excitedly.

"Robbed, Mr. Mosby?"

"Robbed," Mr. Mosby repeated in high perturbation. At the same time he drew from an interior receptacle of his fancy waistcoat a huge handful of bills fastened with a rubber band, for Mr. "Lem" Mosby belonged to that particular world the denizens of which never possess a bank account, but—when "flush"—a "roll." This "roll" he now produced and once more he ejaculated, "Robbed."

"That doesn't look much like it."

"That's it exactly," asserted Mosby. "Some gazabo touched me for my pocket-book that had twenty-five or so in it. But he missed this that I had in my inside pocket. It gave me the willies though and—look here—I want you to keep it for me."

Mr. "Lem" Mosby held out the money and the lawyer took it mechanically.

"There's three thousand dollars," said Mosby hoarsely. "I made a killing last

night and I dunno just what to do with it, so you keep it for me while I make up my mind in the next day or two."

"Why don't you put it in a bank?"

"No bank for me," declared Mr. "Lem" Mosby, clearly entertaining a personal repugnance toward such conventional institutions of the business world. "You put it there in your safe."

"I don't know—" He hesitated.

"That's what I want," announced his client with great decision.

"All right. I'll give you a receipt."

"Receipt—nothing," ejaculated Mosby, waving his hand scornfully. "Between gentlemen—"

"I'd rather—"

"You do what I tell you," directed Mosby arbitrarily. "Let me see you put that in your safe. That's receipt enough for me."

As Mr. "Lem" Mosby was wholly free from the influence of any spirituous excitement and as the lawyer realized that personage would be seriously hurt by a refusal, he rose, opened the safe, deposited the bills within it and relocked the door. He reflected quickly that the money was in reality secure and there could be no harm in humoring the other's passing fancy.

"That's all right," pronounced Mosby huskily and at once rising. "I feel better without that on me, with all the ways of losing it and fooling it away."

Mosby paddled out with active ponderosity. Alone the lawyer stood for a few moments gazing out of the window.

Then the door was hurriedly thrown open and a messenger boy entered abruptly.

"Say," the youngster burst forth. "You're wanted down stairs right off."

"What's the matter?" he demanded in surprise.

"That man that was in here just now. He's been hit by a trolley. I told the cop I'd seen him come out of your place and they sent me up for you."

On the sidewalk a small crowd—all who could pause for a moment in the press of compelling business—was gathered about the head of a stair leading down to a basement office. At the same instant that he reached the edge of the throng, an ambulance clanged up. He and the young physician pushed together through the loiterers, went down the steps past the policeman and together reached the form stretched motionless on the floor. The doctor knelt down beside the body and began a rapid examination.

"It's up to the coroner," announced the incipient Galen as he got on his feet.

During the subsequent official proceedings, no one connected with the deceased appeared and nothing was disclosed as to his personal history. The burial was according to civic usage in such cases. The attorney endeavored to render the ceremonies as reverential as possible. In the first confusion of the event, when he chanced to think of the three thousand dollars, he had casually



While she stuck one pin in her hat she hid the other between her teeth

assumed that the disposition of the amount was something which would speedily be settled. Therefore, as no occasion had arisen for mentioning it, he happened not to speak of it. The day after Mosby was buried, the fact that so large a sum was in his possession struck him forcibly. He got out the roll of bills from his safe and counted it—three thousand and seventeen dollars was the sum, mostly in hundred dollar notes. He took the precaution to carry one of these to the bank. The endorsement of the cashier as to its genuineness was absolutely emphatic.

When he replaced the bill with the rest he reflected that he must at once in some way succeed in finding the rightful possessor of the money. The police had been able to learn that the dead man abode in a small hotel not far from the Union Railway Station. Thither he decided to go immediately. The neighborhood was squalid. The hotel was pretentious and slatternly.

"'Lem' Mosby,'" declared the proprietor, resting the butt of his cigar on the edge of his desk, "was here over a year and a half. He paid regular. The authorities went through his room, but there was only his clothes and a few papers of recent transactions that didn't show anything. Haven't they found nothing since?"

"No."

"Then you got me guessing. Couldn't even tell you what his business was. Something of a card shark, I guess. Not sharp, you know. I never heard a word against him. No crook or confidence man. Just two days before he met his end he told me he'd made a big haul—three thousand dollars."

"Yes."

"Then he had that pocket-book of his stolen. He said the three thousand wasn't in it, but with the squeal he made and the way he tried to get it back I didn't believe him. He just didn't like to admit he'd been fool enough to let such a sum get away from him. The money wasn't found on him and there's no doubt that's the way the three thousand dollars went, fast enough."

"You think so?" he asked.

"I know it," declared the proprietor decidedly. "I'd swear to it."

"Hadn't he any relation?"

"Not as I ever heard of—"

"Or any friends?"

"Now I'd say that Jonas S. Stoddard was the one that knew him best."

"Where can I find him?"

"Runs a coal and wood business out near the stock yards. Look in the directory."

As the young lawyer walked away, he pondered with something of a sense of amusement on his failure to dispose of his trust. If the three thousand dollars was believed to have been lost with the pocket-book, and the opinion of the proprietor of the hotel clearly represented the conviction of those who knew anything about him, why, the money was absolutely in his power. Idly he meditated on the idea. What if he went no further in the matter! No one would or could ever question him. He laughed and lit a cigarette.

Clearly one means remained of obtaining the knowledge that he desired if Jonas S. Stoddard proved unable to furnish him with the information. He must advertise. He could publish a notice asking for a response from anyone kin to Lemuel Mosby.

He found Jonas S. Stoddard in a small, square, single-room building at the corner of the grimy premises covered with coal-bins and sheds containing piles of kindling-wood. The occupant of the dingy structure sat in a chair tilted back against the wall with the heels of his shoes hooked in the upper rung and prepared to devote his time—clearly having no other occupation—to the subject of the inquiry.

"'Lem' Mosby?" he repeated. "Knew him well—once. Fact is, though, about three months ago we had a kind of disagreement—and I hadn't seen him lately."

"Still, you must be able to tell me something about him."

"Can't say as I can," replied Jonas S. Stoddard, pushing back his hat upon his head. "Fact is, I can't. Just knew



"No bank for me," declared Mr. Mosby. "You put it there in your safe."

Mosby from havin' one or two business deals with him that were closed out long ago."

"I'll have to advertise," the inquirer said, preparing to go.

"That wont do you no good."

"Why?"

"Why, 'cause of one thing I can tell you. He let on to me once 'twas so. Mosby wasn't his real name at all."

"What was it?"

"Couldn't inform you. He never gave me a hint."

So that way was closed. He was running up a blind alley. Had he come to "No Thoroughfare" in his investigation? Certainly nothing that he had learned led him to believe that any of "Lem" Mosby's associates was entitled to the money. He would use it more worthily. Truly might he not plausibly argue that Mosby would have been glad to have him keep it? Undoubtedly his client had

in his queer way a certain regard for him. The devil's advocate in him was commencing his appeal. After the manner of that special pleader, the suit was continued with unwearying persistence. Try to dismiss the temptation as he might, the thought kept coming to him. It would steal into distinct recognition in his mind from the subconsciousness in which it was evidently continually lurking. A thousand times he wished that he had announced at the very first that the bank-notes were in his possession. He wondered if even then he had refrained from speaking about them because of some half-formed plan. Ever new reasons and excuses appeared to spring up and force themselves upon him. How many would consider him a fool for hesitating a moment. Was he not a fool? Were not his objections mere fine-drawn figments of an over sensitive honor?

Days passed, and weeks. The money

remained in the safe. That it was still there, he explained to himself, was because really he had no undoubted method of getting rid of it. He went over elaborately the attempts he had made, finding in his failures excuses for his inaction. He had grown restless. He realized that he was not giving the attention to his practice which was fitting. This, however, was partly caused by his anxiety about the girl. Since the day at the park she had never treated him with quite the same responsive cordiality. Was she fearful that on that occasion she had led him to hope what never might be? Was she endeavoring now to show him that she never had cared for him, and that she never would? The change was very slight—merely a little shorter look, only a smile which vanished more quickly, nothing but the variation of a tone in the modulation of her voice. With the eyes and ears of a lover he detected it instantly; with the discerning sense which comes with his state he estimated the significance and value. Veritably he was a greatly beset young man in those days, apparently fulfilling the requirements of the hour as they arose but in reality a prey to many emotions, the battle-ground of many contending passions.

Thereupon, at that very time, a man of about his own age, with whom he had always been on terms of good fellowship, came to him with a proposition. The friend had found an outlying piece of suburban property which in the closing up of an estate was suddenly for sale. On this the man had obtained an option. The offer was that if he would put in twenty-five hundred dollars they would buy it together at the price, five thousand dollars. That speedily, within the year, the value would double, was unquestionable. A little longer and the investment might prove much better.

When his friend had left the office, he went to the safe and for the hundredth time took out the money. Holding it in his hands, he stared at it. If he used it in this way, not a person would ever be the wiser. He was absolutely safe. Others would do it. Why should he hesitate?

With such an opportunity—along with what he was earning—might he not even ask her to marry him? Was he not with such "super-sensitiveness" perhaps jeopardizing his chances with her when by the combination of circumstances he was secure in absolute secrecy, when what he did could only be known to himself, and must from the fact of the obliviousness of all, be almost as if it had never been?

He sat in the same bushy by-way of the park. When they were there together in the early spring, few people were about and now, owing to the lateness of the year, no one was to be seen. The vivid, sunlit leaves were gems set in the golden autumn day. Above his head a branch hanging in the light glowed with topaz and with ruby. He gazed moodily before him and only looked up when he heard a light step.

"You!" he exclaimed, hastily rising.

"You," she repeated and retorted, standing still and laughing.

She appeared to hesitate and then sat down on the bench.

"I confess," she answered gaily, "that I came here to-day because we were here before, though I did not expect to find you."

"I came for the same reason," he declared.

"I'm glad," she said and fell silent.

He watched her for an instant and then broke forth.

"I wonder if I can say something?"

"You can say anything that you want to say," she assured him as she looked at him earnestly. "Anything in the world. Only perhaps I had better say something first. I have just made a discovery that changes a lot."

She held in her hand a small pamphlet which he had not noticed. On the cover in large letters was printed, "Report of the Oschigo General Hospital." She opened it and spread a page out before him, pointing with her finger. The line she indicated ran:

"Lemuel Mosby—\$3,000."

He glanced up at her in amazement.

"Why—what—" he began. "Do you know anything about that?"



"Aren't we going to live in Romance Land?"

"Certainly," she answered. "Everything. Oh, I have a confession to make, too, but I don't mind. I heard all that Mr. Lemuel Mosby said to you that day in the office." She held up her hand for him not to interrupt her. "I have seen how troubled you were, and I knew the truth, because—because," she went on intrepidly, "because I cared. I realized how easy it would be without the receipt, for you to keep the money."

"No, you don't, altogether," he laughed. "Fate almost forced it on me."

"I understood that you were tempted," she replied, nodding. "When this pamphlet came to-day to the president of our company and he told me to throw it away, I looked in it. I have been watching. I knew that in reports of hospitals they publish the donations. I saw 'Lemuel Mosby—three thousand dollars.' I knew that you had sent it and"—she clasped her hands—"I was so glad."

"But," he demanded, "but how—"

"How did I hear?" she interposed. "You know that little recess in your office with the door—where there are empty boxes and all sorts of odds and ends? I should feel very guilty, but I don't. Anyhow that afternoon as I left our company I saw you going into an office a little distance down the hall. Your door was open, and you evidently expected to be gone only a moment. I slipped in. I did not stop to consider. I was very happy—that was just after we had been at the park—and when one is very happy one does very foolish things. When I was in the office I saw the little recess and I thought that I could hide in it, and when you came in I'd make a rattling like a little mouse and then you would come and open the door and you would be so astonished. It was very childish. It was very silly, but I was, as I tell you, very happy. I never imagined

your not being alone. When I saw that some one was with you I was afraid to come out. So I heard all that was said. After Mr. 'Lem' Mosby had gone I was horrified at having been there and I was uncertain what to do, and then they came and called you away and I ran off—the door, you remember, has a catch lock which opens from the inside and I could get out after you had gone. I knew, you see. That is why I have been as I have been, wondering about you and—you did not keep the money."

"More fool I, probably," he commented.

"No," she declared, eagerly. "You have won."

"Won what?"

"Won over yourself and won—" She stopped, suddenly blushing deeply.

"Does it make a difference with you?" he asked quickly.

"Of course. Of course," she exclaimed. "Don't I know now that you are true and strong, and—oh—" she cried suddenly, "don't you see?"

"What?" he asked blankly.

"You have slain your dragon. Don't you remember that we talked about the dragon? Here? You said that once you wanted to fight one. Well, you have. You have conquered your dragon. Oh, they are really scaly, loathly things and each man has a dragon in his life and you have got the better of this one and destroyed it and I can believe in you and trust you."

"Sweetheart, you will," he said, quickly taking her hand, for nobody was in sight.

"Yes," she replied at once.

"We'll be very poor."

"What difference does that make?" she answered valiantly. "What if we haven't much money? Aren't we going to live in Romance Land?"



"Let's blow around to Fillmore"

The Red Seal Wallet

BY PAUL H. HARRIS

Author of "His Little Brown Brother," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. J. MOWAT

THE man in the tan overcoat dodged around the corner of Van Wert and Garden streets, grabbed an expensive pineapple from a fruit-stand and disappeared into the fog.

The sole witness of this bizarre comedy grinned appreciatively and promptly followed the twinkling shoes. He was Fred Bowles, almost-star reporter on the *Telegram*, and the incident appealed to his curiosity. Why should a well-dressed man steal a pineapple? He decided to find out.

The race was short and puffy for both, for the night air was heavily laden and the sidewalks exceeding slippery. The man in the tan overcoat staggered against the brick wall and turned on his pursuer.

"What's it to you?" he gasped.

"Nothing at all," grinned Bowles. "Kind of up against it myself and just followed to find out if you were hungry too."

The stranger shifted the pineapple from under his coat and held it out for inspection.

"I copped a pippin, all right. Got a knife?"

"Sure," answered the boy. "Couldn't hock it."

Without further explanation, the two sat down on the front steps of a flat building and proceeded to carve up the juicy morsel.

"That isn't bad for a breakfast-dinner-supper," gratefully concluded he of the overcoat. "Where are you headed for?"

"Discharge, unseemly and violent,

seems to be my ultimate end right now," answered Bowles. "Ever smoke?"

"When I have one, I do. Thanks."

The reporter gazed out into the dismal night and reflected swiftly. The man at his side was evidently one of the go-as-you-please kind, hungry, well dressed and interesting. For the moment all recollection of his "lemon" assignment was driven from his mind.

"You are lucky to have a job," finally offered the stranger.

"Not this job."

"What are you doing?"

"Trying to find out who stole my boss's wallet."

"Think you'll find out around here?"

"I doubt it," answered Bowles, pointing to the dim lights of a midnight restaurant half way down the block. "That's where he was touched, and the motto over the door is, 'Abandon all coin, ye who enter here.' He ought to have been frisked. He's old enough to know better."

The pineapple thief grinned appreciatively.

"Yes, that's some costly joint," he averred. "What particular *modus operandi* graced the frisk?"

Bowles shifted to a more comfortable position and laid his hand on the other man's shoulder.

"I don't know or care who you are, pal," he commenced; "but if you want to aid digestion by listening to a hard luck story, here goes."

"I'm on; go to it."

"Three months ago I came to this great city, afire with ambition—meaning me, not the city. I also came with an anæmic wad. You know what that means."

"Uh-huh," grunted the man in tan.

"Well, on Christmas night last, just as I unlocked the door to my boarding-house entrance, a frowsy-headed dame, who shall be nameless in this yarn, stepped sadly but firmly into the hall and announced that I was *hors de* boarding house. I gracefully acceded to her demand that I beat it, wandered out into the street, listened to the church bells ringing out glad tidings to all men,

and cursed my luck. I felt no particular bitterness against the poor, ignorant tool of the system who had just turned me out into the street. I realized that she was but a parcel of the great combination of events which conspired daily to prevent me from getting jobs, food or recognition from editors.

"On the morning of December 26th, I woke up in a ten-cent flop on South Market, my bones stiff from sleeping on the soft side of planks, my head aching with bitter regret—regret that I had ever left that dear Petaluma for the big and wicked city.

"On the night of December 26th, I met a hilarious ex-playmate of mine who is now soliciting display ads. on the palladium of our people, otherwise yclept the *Telegram*.

"With his siren voice he convinced me that the Big Town was still yearning for the children of my brain and I listened to him, much against my better sense, for I had fully decided to give up the fight, return to Petaluma and raise chickens some more—the literary life behind and years of buttermilk ahead.

"I regret to tell you that I obtained my present job the very next morning. In exchange for sundry pieces of eight I am supposed to go out amongst them and dig up human interest, vibrating, snappy, honest-to-gosh, front-page stories. The news maniac who holds down the night desk on the *Telegram* is not satisfied with anything less than a peck of diamonds stolen or a prominent citizen disgraced, murdered or lost. Fires, decent deaths, humdrum hold-ups and such do not interest him in the least. I am one of those unfortunate beings who have turned in a really big story on a couple of memorable occasions and consequently my path in life is rough and accursed. The night city not only expects me to do it every day but wants a couple of galley's of live stuff at a lick—he is a most insatiable and efficient official.

"I have been on the paper for four months and have gained nothing but a vast fund of underground experience. To-night I am queerly lonesome and am

very content to be right where I am, sitting on the front step of a very dirty brick building and telling an entire stranger that I am an idiot for not returning post haste to the simple life.

"Five years' previous experience should have taught me there was nothing in the game, but something pulled me back into it and here I am, out on a dead one."

"How's that?" inquired the mildly interested stranger.

"The owner of the sheet which crowds twenty dollars on me every Monday was touched in yon hostelry the other eve. The uncoward incident would have been quickly passed over but for the fact that his lost wallet contained some very important and private papers. The stick-up was rather unique at that."

"Just as the old man emerged at two and a half in the morning, a tall, dark, handsome brigand stepped under the sidewalk awning, shoved a gun under the patrician, slightly colored nose of said owner, and relieved him of his wallet before the taxi starter could recover his voice. It was a very swiftly executed, neatly planned surprise party and the hold-up man deserved the couple of hundred cash he got away with. Blind ads. have been run in all of the papers, offering reward and no questions asked for the return of the papers; reporters have sleuthed; flat-foot bulls have snooped and deducted, and the old codger is wild. The *Call* got hold of the story from the chauffeur and ran big scare heads over it, not forgetting to name the hour. Also their story contained quite a few broad hints as to the probable condition of the *Telegram*'s owner at the time of the crime.

"To-night the night city eased this assignment into me, and I am supposed to stay out on the story until I dig up something tangible. Like a chump I wandered up here to the scene of the robbery; the cops know nothing about it and his wise nibs wont stand for a fake. Incidentally, if I don't come back with something good on this story, I'll sure get the can."

"You would think that I wouldn't

mind a little thing like that, but I do. I'd give my right hand to scoop this town in the morning and beat all the rest of the papers to it. They go to press for the city edition in just one-half of an hour. I therefore figure that in about thirty-five minutes I'll be a free-lance once more.

"It's a great life."

The reporter stretched his legs in front of him and gazed despondently at the sidewalk.

"Let me have those makings again," the stranger said. "I'm going to roll another cigarette and tell you a story which will make you think your lot is Heaven compared with mine."

The boy noticed how the other's hands shook as he twirled the tobacco skillfully into the paper. The man was sick, apparently weak from hunger.

"Why don't you pawn some of that front and get a square meal?" Bowles snapped, his voice querulous.

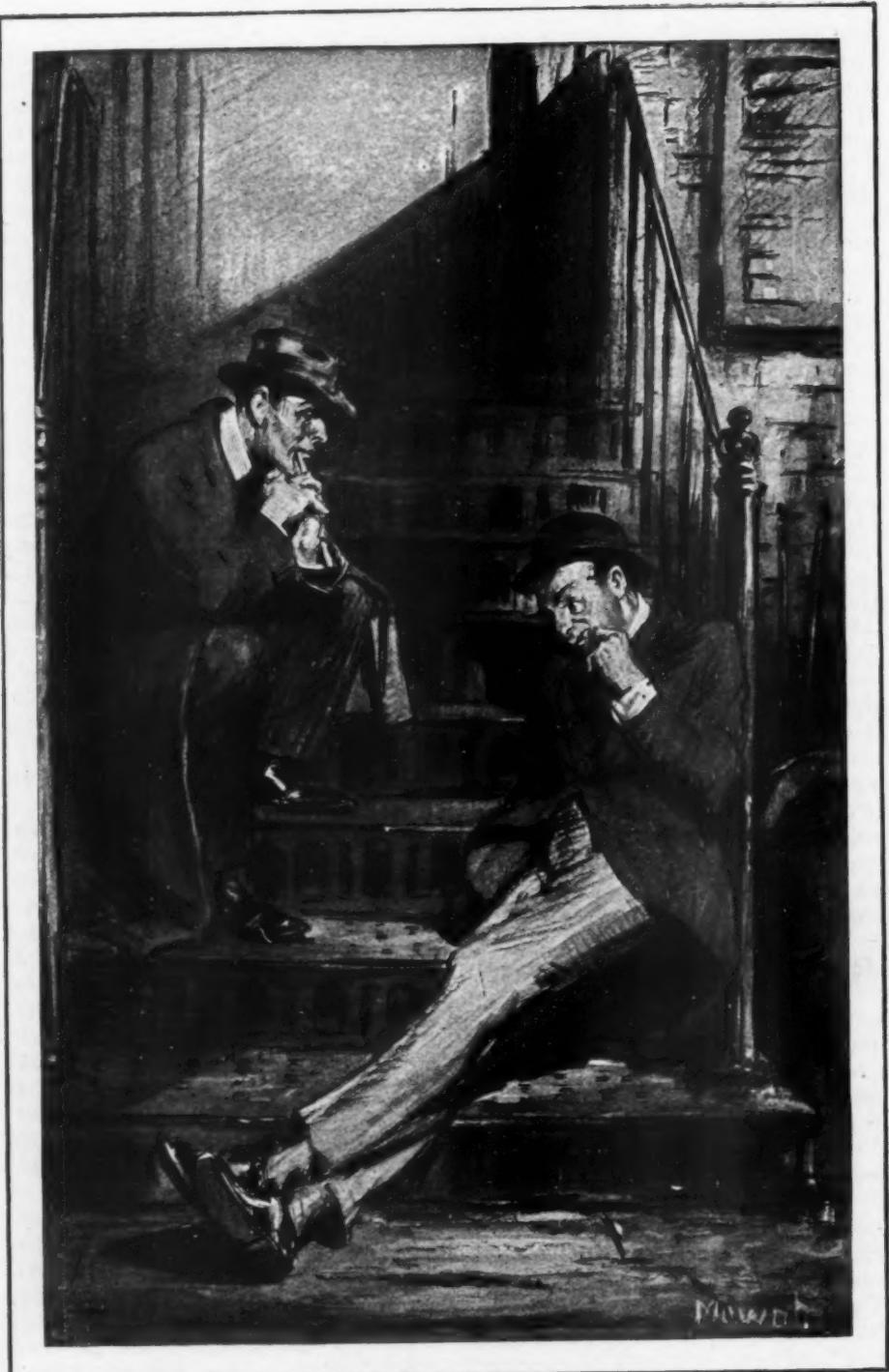
"Nay, lad, nay," responded the stranger. "When I lose that front I am indeed broke. I can get a room in the Palace with it. I still look clean."

As the match flared up, the boy stared at the other in amazement. He had heard of such things, but this was the first *bona fide* experience of its kind that he had ever stumbled across. The man's face was clear cut, square jawed, sharp, angular and clean shaven; his eyes were steady. All in all he looked the part of one who lived by his "front." Better than that, he possessed an attractive grin. Bowles was most favorably impressed with the stranger's possibilities.

"Let's blow around to Fillmore; I know a chop house where I can stand off the manager," he announced. "I think a couple of dozen eggs and some coffee will hit you about 'right."

"Thanks," gruffly answered the older man, falling in step beside Bowles, who was now whistling cheerily, satisfied with the prospect of the ingeniously woven yarn which would be the reward of his approaching rôle of host.

Over the clean linen, steaming dishes before them, the two men gazed at each other understandingly. Here was real



"Why don't you pawn some of that front and get a square meal?"

good fellowship, Bowles reflected. Even if the other was an unknown, he had the appearance and clothes of a gentleman—yes, and the manner too.

The stranger shoved his chair back from the table and snipped off the end of the excellent cigar which had gone with the perfect dinner.

"This beats the fog," he announced cheerfully. "I'll never forget you. I may be able to reciprocate, although I hope not, for I'd hate to see any man in my shoes to-night."

"What's the yarn?" inquired Bowles, sinking down in his chair, head hunched forward in attention.

"It's short and scur," resumed the pineapple thief. "As a newspaper man you may not think it unusual, but here goes:

"Two years ago I was shooting Chinks across the border from Juarez, this being a risky occupation which paid well if you didn't get caught. The coolies were imported by the ship-load from Hongkong to Mazatlan. From Mazatlan they were trekked across country to a nice little hole in the hills just ten miles from Juarez, on the safe side of the line. There we rigged them out as Mexican peons by cutting off their cues, slapping on plenty of coloring matter and posting them on a few Spanish words. They would then be convoyed to the American line and generally got over the river in fine shape. On the American side, my partner rounded them up in bunches of two and three and was responsible for their safe entry into Southern California and the West in general. In this way the big Chinks who hired us were able to avoid the immigration laws and for a couple of years my partner and I made real money. At first I had not been afraid of him—thought he was an O. K. guy and all that, but he gradually got hoggish and didn't want to split up fair.

"I didn't know what ailed him, but it developed that he had the money fever in an aggravated form and I figured it out that he was salting every cent and intended to get out of the business and

buy himself a candy store somewhere. He began wabbling and seemed to have lost his nerve.

"One night he met me in the bar of the *'Cuatro Naciones'* and came clean. He said he was going to quit the business. Seems he had decided to lead a better and less dangerous life. After a lot of hemming and hawing, during which performance he drank lemonade entire, he redded up and confessed that he was going to get married.

"Son, I shook hands with him and told him it was a good idea. He was the gratefulst cuss you ever saw because I didn't kid him about it and we certainly parted the best of friends, him full of memories and lemonade and me crying over old times on his shoulder. We had agreed to get rid of twenty Chinks we had just received from Tampico and then to call the deal off; I was to seek another partner immediately thereafter.

"You have already guessed the result of my talking him into one final turn before we dissolved partnership.

"The very next day we were pinched cold, or at least I was; he got away. It took me five months to worm out of that moth-eaten prison and I've never heard a word from there or from my partner since. I hope he got married O. K. and is doing fine, but if he had held his nerve on that last trip of ours across the line we would have both gotten away. I was awfully disappointed in him; this girl thing seems to get their goat.

"It may not be a very honorable occupation—this putting 'em over on Uncle Sam, but in those days it was sure some alluring and remunerative. Gosh, but that was a great game."

The stranger's eyes were burning brightly with memories of many a midnight sneak under the stars.

"Well, after I got out of that business I shifted from one thing into another and finally wound up by hiking up to Alaska. There I made and dropped quite a bit—drew down to a couple of hundred, bought a ticket for this good old town and landed here three nights ago. It took me exactly two days to get rid of every cent I had, plus one lone

sparkler which had remained intact out of the financial wreckage. I even pawned my suit-case and extra clothes, but the ponies wouldn't run right for me at all. I'm sure flat."

Bowles was bored. The story was very mediocre indeed and his disgust showed on his face.

"Tarry with me a moment," resumed the ex-smuggler of human freight. "This thing may work out better than you think. You haven't wasted your time, son; listen to the finish.

"Last night I was desperate, sore and hungry. All I had left was the front

you see me in now, a horrible conviction that you can't beat the bookies—and a gun.

"The front failed to work; the conviction was bitter and I began thinking about the gun or the wharf.

"Suddenly I recollect that my old partner down in Mexico was an ex-newspaper man and I decided to call up every paper in town and ask for him. I sure had been turned down by a bunch of hard hearted business men who had no need for my doubtful services; it was a bare chance and I grabbed it. I telephoned the papers from my room at the hotel, but none of them had ever heard of my man.

"That was the last straw and I then turned to the consideration of the gun or the wharf, as before mentioned."

Bowles was interested again. This care-free troubadour was either an excellent liar or really was worth knowing; he certainly could not be accused of being a namby-pamby acquaintance of the night, for the stranger related his misdeeds with great glee.

"Describe your ex-partner newspaper man," the boy interjected.

"Two years ago he was short, well dressed, thirsty, fast talking, blue eyed, with curly brown hair. On his right hand the second finger is missing and I guess by this time he hasn't



"On the night of December 26 I met a hilarious ex-playmate of mine."



"Tarry with me a moment," resumed the ex-smuggler of human freight

got much nerve. Marriage seems to take the grit out of some of 'em."

Bowles half raised in his chair with excitement; then he remembered himself and checked up with a deceptive laugh. The stranger had described the night city editor of the *Telegram* to a dot—the dictatorial, editorial "Mister Fleming." Quickly there flashed through the boy's memory the insults and sarcastic comments emanating from the czar of the assignment desk. More than once wild dreams of taking the journalistic snip out in the alley and beating him up had raged through his brain. And now he had Editor Fleming "where he wanted him." Before his next question, Bowles knew the answer.

The stranger was watching the boy's changing face and as he watched, his eyes narrowed like those of a terrier.

"What's biting you, pal of mine?" he suavely inquired, as the reporter frowned in recollection.

"Nothing," growled Bowles. "Your newspaper friend didn't happen to be named Fleming, did he?"

"Nope," responded the other. "Did you think you knew him from my description?"

Bowles smiled and bobbed his head.

"You bet I did. The name makes no difference; I think I know where you'll find your man. He's night city editor of the *Telegram*, Main 3131, and would doubtless be glad to hear from you."

The pineapple thief's jaw dropped in temporary amazement.

"So he has changed his name? Well, well; that's a good one. Say, is he a friend of yours?"

"I should say not," bitterly answered the boy.

"Poetic justice will now be done if that's the case; I don't think you'll lose your job. This is as it should be, for I was hungry and you fed me; I was cold and you gave me a drink. You're a good scout; he's a piker. Listen a minute."

He motioned for the waiter to bring him a table telephone.

"Main 3131. Hello, *Telegram*? I want to speak to the night city editor, Mr. Fleming. What's that? You bet I

want to speak to him—personal matter. Hasn't got time? Tell him Jim Hewitt wants to speak to him—get that? Jim H-e-w-i-t-t."

There was a short pause, and the stranger winked at the reporter.

"Thought that would get him. I'll bet he's glad to hear from me."

His face straightened and he leaned forward to talk closer into the receiver.

"Hello, Tom Hughes, alias Mr. Fleming, the editor. How's the piker? Say, you cold-footed pup, this is Bill talking. I thought you'd recognize my voice. Well, white liver, I'm coming down on the next car to see you and when I get there I am going to tell you something about—Hello, hello, hello."

He hung up the receiver and grinned grimly.

"He sure recognized me quick, partner," he explained to the excited reporter. "He didn't even wait to say good-by. If I know him, you had better get a hump on you and go down and pull your wires for his job. I pity the girl that dub married."

Bowles had recovered from his bewilderment at the speed of events; a sudden discovery while the other was talking made it absolutely necessary that he control himself and act quickly. He yawned, shot out his arms luxuriously and cast a swift, apparently unconcerned glance around the crowd in the café.

Over at a near-by table he espied the one man in all the world whom he wanted to see. This was none other than plain-clothes man Duffy of the Central Detail, one of the few detectives he had ever respected.

Still keeping up his play of good natured tolerance, he laughed easily when the stranger picked up the telephone and called the paper again. There was a delay in getting the number and the boy made the most of his chance, the stranger failing to notice his quick slant of the eyes toward Duffy. The plain-clothes man flashed back his signal of understanding, and Bowles pointed boldly toward his friend across the table, his finger crooked under the table-cloth and hidden from the other's view.

"Well, old man, you've certainly paid nicely for your meal," observed Bowles, rising to his feet. "I'm awfully glad to have met you. You helped me more than you know."

The stranger shrugged his shoulders and reached for his overcoat. As he did this, Bowles cast one hurried glance over his shoulder, wig-wagged the detective and stepped around the table.

"Let me hold it for you," he said, surprised at the evenness of his voice, for he was in the middle of a big moment; in his hands he held the key to a big front page story, for as the stranger had reached for the telephone, Bowles had noticed the corner of a red seal wallet sticking up in the other's inside pocket.

Suddenly the stranger turned to him.

"Wait a minute," he said, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder. "I'm broke right now, but extremely happy, for I have met a human being who has a heart. I'm going to do you a real favor now. You didn't ask me what I did last night when I was figuring on the wharf or the gun. Well, I used the gun; I held up your esteemed owner. Here's the wallet; tell him the bookies got the two hundred. Be good, boy. You're all right."

He settled the tan overcoat snugly around his shoulders, smiled again, waved his hand and disappeared through the swinging doors.

Duffy nudged the reporter.

"What did you want?" he crisply inquired.

Bowles came out of his trance with a jump.

"Duffy, have a cigar. You'll find it better than my hunch was; I was mistaken in my man."

The "bull" from Central Detail shrugged his shoulders and walked back to the table where his friends were.

"The old sinner beat me to it," murmured Bowles to himself. "I'm glad he did. Guess I'll call up the paper."

And as he called for Main 3131, his mouth rippled into broad grins, for in one hand he tightly clutched the famous red seal wallet, tossed to him from out of the fog.



Miguel

Cupid's Consul

BY HOUGHTON HUGHES

Author of "A Coffee Plot," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY A. W. GRANN

WHEN Samuel P. Trudell had manufactured printing-presses in Rahway, N. J., for twenty-five years, he decided suddenly that he needed a change of scenery and started out the very next day with his daughter on a two months' trip around Jamaica and the Antilles as a Cook's tourist. It was hard work for Trudell to fit himself into the itinerary: when the *Moltke* was ready to steam from St. Lucia he had fallen in love with the scenery and the bibulous commandant of the quaint town and wished to dally longer, while when she anchored three days off shell-paved Guadalupe he swore and fumed at the delay and refused to leave the deck. So at Trinidad, despite the protests of Camilla—who

was getting along very nicely with the officers—he tore up the coupons in a rage and peremptorily ordered them to lower his baggage over the side. Thereafter he began conducting his own tour of the West Indies.

The two knocked about among the islands by easy stages, staying wherever they liked, till they drifted one morning into sleepy old San Carlos on board the little 500-ton fruiter, *Ethelwold*—which was after a cargo of bananas. A couple of weeks later Trudell was sitting on the broad front *galeria* of the Café Billares with James Blakely, the United States vice-consul, and M. de Trevignac, the old French *chargé*.

"Sure, I like to look at it all right,"

he said loudly, waving a cigar at the pale blue bosom of the Caribbean heaving below them, "but after a while a man gets an itchin' to dodge trolley-cars again an' see a baseball game and an Irish policeman—now don't he? But this country down here's opened my eyes, I tell you. Hey, Mateo, fix up three o' them Trudell swizzles you make. Gad, here's Cap'n Larsen an' young Munson! Sit down, sit down! What'll you have?"

"I see all your greens are aboard, Captain," remarked Blakely slowly, flicking cigar ash from his white duck.

"Yes; we'll leave at eleven with the water."

"Eleven to-morrow?" cried the consul sharply, spinning around.

"Yes," said Larsen, setting down his glass, "we ought to make Key West by this time Saturday, eh, Munson?" He filled his pipe and shoved back his chair.

"Goin' back to the boat now? I'll be with you," cried Trudell as he strode down the wharf to the captain's dory. "These people round here seem mighty sleepy to-day."

Blakely did not look up.

"*Au revoir!*" cried the French *chargé*, waving his long, thin hand. The consuls watched the dory sweep in under the lee of the *Ethelwold* before either spoke.

"They're going at eleven to-morrow," repeated Blakely in a low voice.

"*Oui, oui*, so *M'sieu* said."

"Ah, you don't understand, my good Trevignac! Why, a week ago, before the *Ethelwold* dropped anchor here, I was happy and contented in filling the multifarious duties of the U. S. Consul at San Carlos; but now I'm—I'm sick! I'm in love with Trudell's daughter—Camilla Trudell. I've got it bad too, I tell you! And now they're going and if I only had—"

"Ah yes, you are young," soothed the old Frenchman. "Yes, I have observe' you with her. Trudell he is—bah! a barber! But *Mademoiselle*, ah, what radiance! *Haute noblesse* to her very finger tips! She will be a queen among women. An angel, *très glorieuse!*"

"Yes, I know, I know! Don't make it any worse!"

"Ah, *mon pauvre!* Ah, *jeunesse!* I too was once young." He ran his fingers through his pompadour fiercely and drummed on the marble-topped table. "Sacré, *M'sieu*, to-morrow then, you lose her. If the *Ethelwold* did not sail all would be well. A week longer and you would win her, *n'est-ce pas?* But *tiens!*" he exploded energetically, clutching Blakely's sleeve and whipping off his hat.

The Consul stared at him vacantly.

"I—Jean Gaston Vaumartin de Trevignac—shall help you! *Comprenez-vous?* You are still young in the arts of diplomacy, but I, *M'sieu*, have not been French Consul at Sofala, at Malacca, at Apia in '92 and at Hakodate in the riots for notheeng. Sometimes it is necessary the vessel shall *not* sail. Also I have put in my time as engineer on the *Admiral Gallifet*—not for notheeng. Then, too, I serve not only *Monsieur* but *Mademoiselle* Camille, is it not so? Ah, I have watched! How does your poet say it—'The light that lies in women's eyes—'" And waving his broad Panama he hummed in a cracked voice.

The sunset gun was fired from the fortress at the harbor mouth and the consuls stood at salute as their flags, fluttering in the light Carib breeze, came down the staffs over the whitewashed, adobe houses. Shortly afterward Miguel, the native major-domo of the French legation, closed the gate and strolled slowly across the Prado in his garish striped pantaloons and broad straw hat, rolling a cigarette languidly. Hiding behind a tobacco hogshead was Teresa Ortega, the belle of San Carlos, waiting to spring out playfully as her lover came near. She was lighter in hue than the native girls, with a heavy strain of Spanish blood that gave her the dark lashed eyes, the flush of color on each cheek, the slender figure and all the coquetry of a *doña* of Seville. They strolled on with hands clasped till de Trevignac shrilled out from the galeria:

"Hi, Miguel! *Muchacho, tiens!*" Miguel and Teresa stood waiting respectfully.

"*M'sieu, I leave you,*" said the *chargé*. "See that there is no worry. Your *affaire de cœur* has now become a matter of diplomacy. I shall commune with my Miguel. He has the makings of a diplomat." And grasping his cane and bowing, he shuffled to the narrow steps and came down into the Prado where he shooed off the plump Teresa with an impatient gesture and walked along with the embarrassed Miguel, the two casting sinister glances now and then at the freighter in the offing.

Blakely nodded his head condescendingly as if to humor the old schemer, but left alone, he sighed deeply like the cheerless exponent of a lost cause.

II

Loaded down to her Plimsoll marks with the first crop of the Banana Syndicate, the yellow-funnelled *Ethelwold* stood next morning a few hundred yards off from the San Carlos jetty, stark and naked against the wonderful background of the blue Caribbean. A faint haze breathed out from her stack; native canoes scampered around her sides; Larsen superintended the stowing of the last load of soft coal, while Munson, on a plank slung over the side, directed the men painting out the scars that a thousand tons of bananas left in passing over the side. But hidden under a ceiba tree near the custom house, Miguel the halfbreed surveyed these preparations for departure with a cynical grin on his shady countenance, for he clasped in his trousers pocket the oily forward eccentric crank-shaft connecting-bolt of the doughty fruiter.

Trudell and Camilla and a traveling auditor of an asphalt company were the only passengers. The manufacturer was getting a last package of thick, heavy cigarettes from an old Spaniard who had struck his taste and with these under his arm came bustling down when the hoarse siren sounded its warning.

"Well, I guess it's good-by to this *dolce far niente* comic opera background!" he shouted to de Trevignac, who sat on a wicker arm-chair near the

wharf. "If you ever get up North I want to see you again, sir."

"Your visit has charmed us all, *M'sieu.*"

Camilla, in white pongee, came down to the jetty slowly with Jim Blakely. The sun glinted on her light hair; a delicate breeze ruffled it bewitchingly, but her eyes were focused on the shells at her feet and her fingers picked uneasily at her hat. Only de Trevignac could see where their hands were together, but he pretended not to observe as he stepped forward to say good-by. Poor Camilla looked up at him helplessly and her eyes threatened any moment to overflow.

"*Au revoir, Mademoiselle.* I shall miss you ver' much. We shall all miss you ver' much. Good-by, *Mademoiselle*, and *au revoir!*" He bowed in the gallant fashion of the Boulevard St. Germaine.

"Come on, Camilla," sung out Trudell from the stern of the dory. "Get it over quick like I do—that's the on'y way. Good-by there, Blakely, for the second time." He stood up in the boat to extend his hand to the consul. "Come an' see us if you get up North—do."

Camilla faced Jim for a moment and they shook hands. "Good-by, J—Mr. Blakely," she said simply and turning quickly she took the purser's hand to jump into the boat. The siren grunted again. De Trevignac and half the population of San Carlos waved farewell to them, but Blakely, with hands clasped behind him, walked slowly back to the adobe consulate alone.

And then the *Ethelwold* did not sail after all! De Trevignac, never leaving his wicker chair, with the *Figaro* in one hand and his cane in the other, watched the dory swing on the davits, heard the chorus of the steam capstan, the blast of the siren, saw Trudell and Camilla pull chairs to the rail, saw the stack belch forth sooty smoke, once, twice, three times—but the screw gave no answering churn in response. Instead, the engines brought up after a few revolutions with a hiccup that seemed to lift the fruiter a half-foot out of water.

There was a sound below that echoed between the coral arms of San Carlos—a rattling, grunting roar of protest—and the *Ethelwold* continued to form part of the picturesque scenery of the old harbor.

The *chargé* was so astounded at her conduct that he quite forgot his lunch and sat in the wicker chair from eleven till after two o'clock, when the davits dropped the dory again and he made out Trudell's flanneled figure with Larsen in the stern.

"Well, by gad, what d'ye think o' that! Here we are again!" yelled Trudell disgustedly. "Now they can't start the blamed engines! At the last minute some part smashes—blast it all! Oh, I don't know *what* but here we're stuck and can't move, I'll bet, for another day!"

"Mos' extraordinaire! I am ver' sorry, *M'sieu!* Can I help you, I wondaire? The *Ambassade Française* is at your service. Miguel, my cane and shade."

"Can't do nothin'," muttered Larsen distractedly. "During the coalin' my starboard Nichols bolt on the eccentric shaft either dropped into the bunkers or some o' those confounded Haytian niggers on the lighter stole it. The blamed hole was plugged with oakum—that's why Bannister never noticed it. Don't tell *him*, whatever you do, but I don't know when we'll ever be able to start up."

Trudell stamped back again, covered with perspiration.

"Here, Larsen, didn't you say last night there was some other freighter around these islands goin' North to-day that you hoped to beat?"

"The *Daghestan*, Mooney's boat, at St. Kitts—"

"I'll cable her to take me up if it costs five hundred dollars—I'm goin' North if I have to walk!"

"She leaves St. Kitts at four o'clock," volunteered Munson, who had come ashore. "You'll have to hustle, sir!"

"I'll get her! I'll get her! Here; where's the blamed cable station? Take me up there!"

"I shall accompany *M'sieu* and use my influence with Pepo Barquin, who is a rascal," cried de Trevignac, hurrying along at the big fellow's side. Before they started off, however, the French *chargé* turned and fixed his keen eyes for a moment on the gaping countenance of Miguel, who was listening to the harangue. They walked along the white pebbled road rapidly to the station in the fortress. A moment after them, Miguel dropped into a canoe and skimmed along the green canal with powerful strokes also in the direction of the old Spanish ruin.

Trudell was panting and de Trevignac limped painfully an hour later when they reached the shack that served as the cable office, in a little recess in the moss-grown masonry. The door was locked.

"By gad, I'll kick it in if he don't open it. We on'y got half an hour now!" The American rattled the little door fiercely and the *chargé* beat upon it with his cane. Not a sound came forth but, aroused by the din, three San Carlos grenadiers with Remington rifles ambled lazily out of a casement.

"*Ou est Pepo Barquin?*" demanded de Trevignac with a show of anger.

"Yas, boss, Pepo Barquin, he go round to Baraçoa lil' time ago. He get message from father, him sick. See?" They pointed to the empty buoy where Pepo's sloop was usually tied.

Trudell stifled an oath while the *chargé* rattled off volubly in French.

"When'll he be back? How far is Baraçoa anyway?"

"Yas, boss, be back in hour—him three, four mile."

"An hour! That means three! Too late! She'll be gone! An' I've got to stay in this confounded place an' chew my fingers! Well, let's hike back again—there might be another tramp knockin' around among the islands. Who knows?"

But when they got back they found there was none in the neighborhood of San Carlos. And de Trevignac forgot his aching feet and his heart leaped up as it had not done before since he ogled

the girls in the Place Verdun, for the first thing they saw on reaching the town was Jim Blakely and Camilla strolling debonairly under the palms of the Prado, taking alternate bites from a red banana.

"*Jeunesse! Jeunesse!*" softly warbled the ancient lover.

"Oh mush!" snapped the manufacturer of printing-presses.

III

The whole world over, Nature afforded nowhere a more perfect spot for a lovers' paradise than the dreamy, shaded roads of San Carlos. The island seemed like a stage always set for a musical comedy. And Jim Blakely and Camilla fitted into it nicely. The arduous duties of his office never sat upon him so lightly as during these balmy days that followed the ineffectual attempt of the *Ethelwold* to depart. There was not another blue Nichols connecting bolt to be had in the Antilles, so Larsen, after a vain hunt through the bunkers, cabled North for the sister-ship, the *Caracas*, to fetch one down and wondered how long the bananas would keep. The ship was good for an eight day wait at least.

"Do you know I prayed for something to happen, Jim?" whispered Camilla as they sat in a sequestered nook on the veranda of the Hotel Orilla del Mar and listened to the strumming of a native orchestra outside in the Prado.

"I guess I prayed some too, Camilla. I felt—I knew you couldn't be carried

off from me like that. It wouldn't be right—it simply *couldn't be!*"

"No, Jim."

"Little girl, I think we were made for each other," he said softly and sought her hand. Then he brushed back her hair from her forehead and kissed her. "Camilla, I love you and I will always be good to you." She made a sobbing noise in her throat and he kissed her again and she pressed his hand and after that it didn't make any difference what anybody said. Long after Trudell had run out swearing from the Café Billares and given the band forty *centavos* to wind up the concert, the two walked hand in hand down the moonlit shore road to the sleepless Caribbean.

Other lovers were out that night beside themselves, for while passing a



"Ah, yes, you are young," soothed the old Frenchman

leafy bower in the Plaza Ventura they heard the clear, silvery laugh of Teresa Ortegas.

"Ah, my friend Miguel is taking advantage of the evening," said Jim and they passed on with kind consideration. But it was not the simple *muchacho* who held the slim waist of the Carib maid, for Munson, the red-cheeked third engineer, was seated beside her on the fallen cocoanut palm, whispering sweet nothings into her willing ear. Munson was brawny and muscular and active and the Carib belle had one arm around his sunburnt neck while he descended to her upon the Brooklyn Bridge and the great buildings of the magic city of the North that were as high as thirty *Orilla del Mars* on top of one another. And Teresa laughed again and patted his cheeks in glee while he pinched her arms playfully.

When Jim and Camilla strolled back from the fortress, the dory was waiting to take her to the fruiter. Jim had given the sailor a dollar to be an hour late. Under the shadow of the custom-house gate they kissed each other again and standing together in the silence, they endeavored to discover whether their hearts were beating as one and did other foolish things that do not concern us who have to get on with this story.

It so fell that night that eight people in old San Carlos were conversing in couples at the same time.

In his room at the consulate de Trevignac, just getting back from the Café Billares, whistled for Miguel, who ambled up obediently. "Ah, you are watching, *muchacho?* *Très bien!* You are a diplomat indeed. It goes along ver' well, the little affair. Our M. Blakely is young in diplomacy—he does not even suspect our little *coup d'état*: But you mus' watch sharp the vessel, Miguel, night and day, if you do notheeng else. Bah, I could make a connecting bolt eccentric myself! The men are barbers! Still they *might* do it—so watch! And also your trick on Pepo was ver' nice. But keep the eye open, *mon ami!* M. Trudell is ver' impatient."

"Yas, yas," grinned Miguel sheepishly. "Me watch good, boss! Watch good!"

"You see," continued the *chargé*, warmed with wine of San Carlos, "you see, my dear Miguel, it is in this way: M. Blakely, he represents the United States of America; I—I have the grand honneur to represent *La République Française*; but you, my dear Miguel, you are *l'ambassadeur d'amour*—you are consul here for Cupeed himself! Cupeed, son of Venus, eh? Is it not so?"

"Yas, yas, boss," asserted Miguel, carrying out the lamp with a yawn. "Me Cupeed Consul."

At this same time the dory was grating against the *Ethelwold's* companion-way noiselessly. Camilla hopped out and tiptoed up the side to pause a moment and then patter along the deck.

"That you, Camilla?" Trudell puffed on his cigar in the darkness and raised himself from a deckchair.

"Yes," she answered.

"Pretty late, aren't you? I waited up to speak to you," he began seriously. "Jim Blakely with you, I s'pose. Now look here; you an' he are gettin' too thick in my opinion an' it aint right, girl." He put his huge arm around her clumsily. "I want you to put him outer your head. No sense in fallin' in love with a cheap Yankee consul like that, d'you hear me, Camilla? He aint the man for you. Half o' them are sent down here by their families to drink themselves to death at the expense of the gov'ment."

"Not Jim!" she cried in protest, clutching the sleeve of his coat. "Some of them may be, but you shouldn't say that of Jim and you know it, dad! He's different!"

"Well, now, child, you know what I'm drivin' at. I'm lookin' out for you as you've got no mother an' I want to see you do well, don't I?"

Camilla continued to stare out over the iridescent Caribbean that glittered now sadly, now wickedly, now cynically, and vied with the fires in her eyes.

"Don't I?" Trudell persisted.
"Ye-es."



Camilla, in white pongee, came down to the jetty slowly with Jim Blakely

"There now, I knew you'd see it the way I do. I on'y say what's best for you, don't I? Well, kiss dad good-night an' run along now, child. Best little girl ever father had!" But he smoked three more cigars and thought and thought before he turned in himself.

Jim Blakely, in his room at the Orilla del Mar was at the same time communing with himself. He whistled softly. "Lucky dog I am to have a little girl like her to care for me. Ah, those eyes, that hair, those lips, that smile—" Rushing over to the bureau, he snatched up a tiny photograph of Camilla taken in Martinique and pressed it to his lips.

"Camilla, were you and I together, in fair or stormy weather—"

And on the trunk of the fallen cocoanut palm, chaperoned by the moon, Munson and the olive-skinned Teresa were still sitting; and she, with never a thought of Miguel, was teaching him to say in Spanish, "I love you."

IV

Trudell threw down his cards at the Café Billares, four nights later, with a snort. "I think this 'sweet do nothin' ' fever o' this place'll get hold o' me if I don't look out. Anyway, Mateo St. Pierre Giordani, you bag o' bones, fetch me some o' José's cigarettes an' see what these gentlemen'll have."

"He walks like a man in love," snickered de Trevignac, indicating Blakely approaching the table.

Trudell grunted ambiguously. "Well, we're here because we're here, Jim," said he, "for another night, an' that fluke Larsen said we'd be out the next day. I bet I lose that Gov'ment Printin' Office contract to supply those new presses on the head of it. An' I'm takin' it as easy as a loon—*dolce far niente* gettin' the best o' me!" He reached for his swizzle.

Miguel appeared for a moment

framed in the entrance and then sidled up to the French *charge*'s chair.

"Gentlemen," said de Trevignac with a flourish, "permit that I announce your relief. The lights of the *Caracas* are reported off the bar. Ver' probilee she anchors there and comes inside in the morning."

"Bravo!" cried Trudell. "If nothin' breaks down on her too, she'll be the first thing I've seen here on time yet."

"It is to be your last night with us, M. Trudell, and Mateo has a little repast for us on the *galeria* to which the lights of the *Caracas* will lend added zest. Permit that I escort you."

He saw Trudell and Blakely seated and then returned to speak to Mateo.

"Mr. Trudell," spurted Jim, leaning over the table with a sudden resolve, "I—I love Camilla—"

"Eh? What? You do! Well, why don't you tell her?" snapped Trudell, which was not what he meant to say at all. He puffed at his cigar vigorously.

"I have," said Jim, "and—"

"Well, well, tell her again! They like to hear that!"

"But—but, sir, I want to marry her."

"Oh—oh! You do! Marry my Camilla? Great Scott! You hear this fellow, Trevy?" he cried to the *charge* at the bar. "Come here an' listen to him! It's a joke! He wants to marry my Camilla—na-ha!"

"*Quel miracle!*" cried the Frenchman, putting up his glasses with a smirk. "Sacré!"

"He—he!" gasped Trudell. "Good Lord, he—he! Why say, you got about as much chance o' marryin' her as you got o' goin' back to the States with us to-morrow, that's what!"

Mateo brought the dishes to the table silently and de Trevignac placed the little brown casseroles before them. Jim stared out over to the lights of the *Caracas* that swam up and down on the water like restless fireflies. The big fellow attacked his bird with avidity.

"Great, aint it? You're all right, Mateo; it's good stuff. Come on, boy, you'll get over it! Set to an' eat somethin'!"

Jim pushed back his chair. "No—no—not to-night. You gentlemen will excuse me. Some other time—"

"*Non! Non!* It is not permit'!" objected de Trevignac, clutching his arm as he turned out. "You mus' sit down and eat with us!" There was that in his eye and in his voice that made Jim obey willy nilly. Mechanically he took up his napkin again.

"*Très délicieuse!*" cried the *charge*, removing the cover of his casserole. "Come, *mon ami*, try yours!"

The manufacturer stopped chewing. Jim removed the cover absently and then put down his fork and looked up. There was no piping hot pigeon before him—only a crinkled envelope from the cable office, folded and folded to fit into the dish.

"Humph!" grunted Trudell. "Glad you stayed?"

Still staring at the two men, Jim opened it with fingers that trembled just a little. He read:

Hon. James Blakely,

U. S. Vice-Consul, San Carlos:

The Secretary of State directs me to inform you that the request for a two months' leave of absence filed in this office is hereby granted, the President in accord. Above leave to become effective on receipt of this.

Respectfully,

Donald R. Swan,
Ass't Sec. of State.

"Glad you stayed?" grunted Trudell again.

"Mr. Trudell," cried Jim, standing up and clasping his hand, "I don't understand! I—"

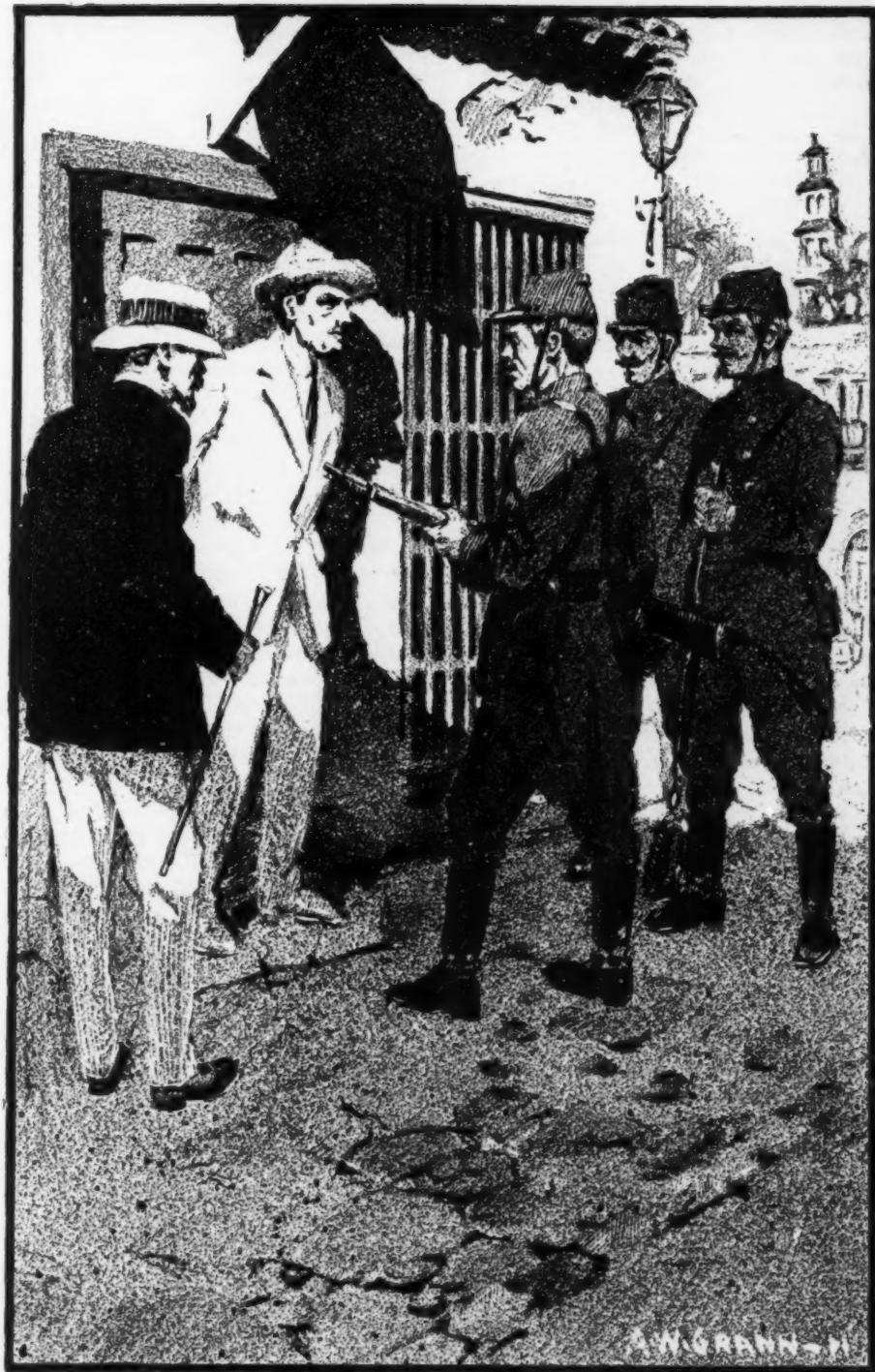
"Sit down an' eat. An' mind you never forget Trevy here. It seems he's a mighty good friend of yours!"

"But the leave! I sent no application to Washington! I—"

"Well, I did."

"How did you ever get it through?"

"Oh, that's easy. I got a few old cronies around the State Department. That's easy, boy, easy. You see that girl o' mine is just as bad gone on you, an', an' Camilla's all I got an' she can talk some, as you'll find out, son, before you know her very long! You're comin' up



"Où est Pepo Barquin?" demanded de Trevignac with a show of temper

North with us—in fact you'd better quit this *opéra-bouffe* atmosphere altogether an' come with me into the printing-press business. So you'll be all ready to-morrow now! Hey, Mateo, *Mateo!*"

V

Early next morning the spare Nichols bolt was transferred to the lame fruiter; steam was rushed into her cylinders and once more she made the mangrove swamps echo with her impatient siren.

"Well, I aint so crazy about goin' myself now," muttered Trudell, as they watched the launch carrying off the consul's baggage, "except I gotter look after you folks. Now don't forget the place on your visit North, de Trevignac! We'll show you something up there. Good-by, people!"

The *charge* drew Jim away from the wharf and beckoned to Miguel, the half-breed. "Before you leave, *M'sieu*, permit that I command you to Miguel—Cupeed's Consul—who has served you better than you know." And he whispered quickly to him the machinations of the mild-eyed Carib that kept the party in San Carlos.

Blakely, with beaming eyes, shook his lean hand heartily.

"But now," continued the Frenchman, "we shall relieve him of his office. My dear Miguel, I know you have been longing to see your black-eyed Teresa, so it is permit' that you rejoin her, for the legation of Cupeed is closed—the colors are lowered and the work is done. *Allons!*"

"See here," said Jim, fumbling with his wallet. "Here, Miguel, here's something to start you in housekeeping—and to keep Cupid's Legation open, because, *M'sieu*," added he to de Trevignac, "it should never be closed!"

And Miguel shuffled off obediently up the shell road with enough in his pocket to make him a San Carlos magnate.

"And now, *M'sieu*, how can I thank you for what you have done and how can I say good-by?" cried Jim.

"*Tiens! Tiens!* To be able to perform such a task of diplomacy is its

greatest reward! You see, *M'sieu*, I can always help others but myself—*jamais!* Why, the one girl I loved back in Souvain ran off to Algiers with a Tirailleur!"

Camilla, laughing and blushing ingeniously, pulled away her hand as he bent over it and instead kissed his old, drawn face, to his immense delight; then the dory made its last trip from the ancient wharf.

He stood there waving his broad Panama while the snout of the *Ethelwold* swung around and she stood out for the Caribbean. The tricolor on the Consulate dipped in salute; the siren snorted three times and as M. de Trevignac turned back to the thatched huts and the palm trees of San Carlos, the erect figure drooped and a misty film spread over his fine black eyes.

Straight up the white road sped Miguel meanwhile, to the cottage of Timoteo where dwelt Teresa Ortegas, the ward of Pepo Barquin. All week he had fretted under the duty that held him watching the fruiter, but now he was free and the marriage with his *querida* was assured. He crackled the bills in his pocket.

In front of the cottage reclined Pepo the cable operator, lazily, insolently.

"Ah, *buenos tardes, amigo mio*," he drawled, frowning at Miguel. "Is it that there is another message for me from Baraçoa?" His voice was unctuous and insinuative. He had never forgiven Miguel for the trick that called him away from the cable station when the rich American was eager to cable the *Daghestan* at St. Kitts. He knew the fat tips Trudell was in the habit of extending to the natives.

"Teresa!" called Miguel, putting his head in the doorway and ignoring him.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the operator.

"Teresa—Teresa!"—again and with a note of alarm.

"Ho, ho! Go on, go on! Teresa—Teresa! But there is no Teresa, *Señor!* *Pobrecito loca!* It is now a treeck on Miguel! Ho, ho, Teresa? She is gone see the Brooklyn Breedge with Meestar Munson, the engineer! You would find

Teresa? Then you must look out there!" And Pepo indicated the rapidly disappearing hull of the fruiter. "Now you feel how it is to be treecked, eh? Like a boy we dress her up while Timoteo sleeps las' night. She smuggle on board boat. At Key West they get married—your Teresa. She marry good Americano—live in Brooklyn, eh? How you like that? Now no more of your treecks, Miguel." Throwing down his cigar he yawned lazily and slouched into the hut.

Miguel just stood there as a man who is shot stands before he lurches. Then with a startled cry he burst into the house. He rushed madly through the two rooms, calling out her name and tearing at every possible place of concealment. He leaped up the ladder to the thatch and poked at it desperately. Fortunately for himself Pepo did not laugh again when Miguel came down.

The expression on his face froze the mirth in the operator's throat.

Back along the shell road went Miguel. Some one was coming along the Placido Ventura, so he slipped like a culprit from the road down to the water and lay in his old place from which he had spied out upon the crippled *Ethelwold*. Slowly he pulled from the spacious pocket of his multicolored pantaloons the long-sought frictionless Nichols bolt of the freighter and with an oath cast it from him desperately, far out into the coral depths to watch it sink into the tepid water.

The someone who was coming along the shell road was a girl—a girl whom he had never seen before, a girl of much olive beauty. And she saw Miguel and he saw her, and that instant Teresa was forgot in this new vision—for she had smiled.

The Cage-Man

BY HAROLD C. BURR

Author of "The Red Dove of War," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MONTE CREWS

WHEN he was scarcely out of his teens, Andy Storke went to live among the cage-men. The charge against him was house-breaking and the Judge sent him away for twenty years at hard labor. Storke was game about it. He gulped once, fumbled at the open collar of his shirt, and twisted his cap like a woman wringing out clothes. Only the nearest court officer noticed the sudden glitter of the eyes and their sidelong look of cunning. The convicted boy wanted to remember that judge who was pronouncing sentence on him. Some day Storke would get his liberty back and then—well, as he stood there at the rail, handcuffed to a burly policeman, he felt capable of murder. But the court officer lived in the same ward and said nothing.

Though Storke couldn't read he knew the name—Judge O'Leary. He had always known it, it seemed to him now. It was the only name he did know save his own, and they were soon to take that away from him. Cage-men didn't have names; they were given numbers and by those numbers were known. Storke knew, because he had talked with convicts.

It was a great stone house of beasts they were sending him to. Often he had wondered if the cage-men slept on straw. Once as a child he had visited the menagerie. The smell returned to his nostrils, sickening him. Cage-men and animals in captivity—it couldn't be a far cry. He would soon know.

As they were leading him out, still manacled to the burly policeman, the judge, garbed in his flowing robes, swept

by him in all the majesty of the law. Storke shrank against his keeper. He was afraid of that man. He had too much power vested in his whim, the power to take away and to blight. The next instant Storke was swayed by the primitive.

He leaped blindly at the skirts of O'Leary's official gown and would have fastened his bared teeth in it but for the chain at his wrists. It brought him up with a jerk. He whirled about ferociously, then quieted down, panting, eyes gone bloodshot. It was no use. They had him leashed like a dog. He would have to wait those twenty years.

"All right, Storke," said a soothing voice at his elbow. "It won't help any. He only gave you what you deserved."

Storke brooded over that. A policeman had said it. He had always had a profound respect for "coppers." Got what he deserved, hey? He pondered that short speech. The copper ought to know. Coppers were wise ones. And yet—and yet—

Storke laughed harshly, bitterly. They were just trying to make a fool out of him. It was a dirty plot all the way through. But he was afraid of the police department and kept still about his suspicions.

He knew better than to try to get even with them. A crook could *elude* the law if he was clever, but to *fight* it was another thing. It couldn't be done—successfully. No criminal ever attempted it. The whole craft knew better than to tackle such an octopus, even the novices just breaking into the profession.

But with Judge O'Leary it was different. Somewhere he lived by himself in a private house, apart from the Octopus. Outside his stuffy, foul little courtroom he had no jurisdiction. He had no more right than the average citizen, than Andy Storke, convicted felon, himself! Storke was a cute one. He had thought it all out in a few illuminating seconds, eyes narrowed to cautious slits. But the police must never suspect that he had learned anything. If the Octopus thought he was holding something back it would uncoil its tentacles and drag him into a room. The

door would lock automatically. On the other side some one would laugh at him. He would find himself facing the greedy Octopus. His knowledge would be squeezed out of him. Oh yes, Andy Storke knew a thing or two about the sweat-box of the third degree.

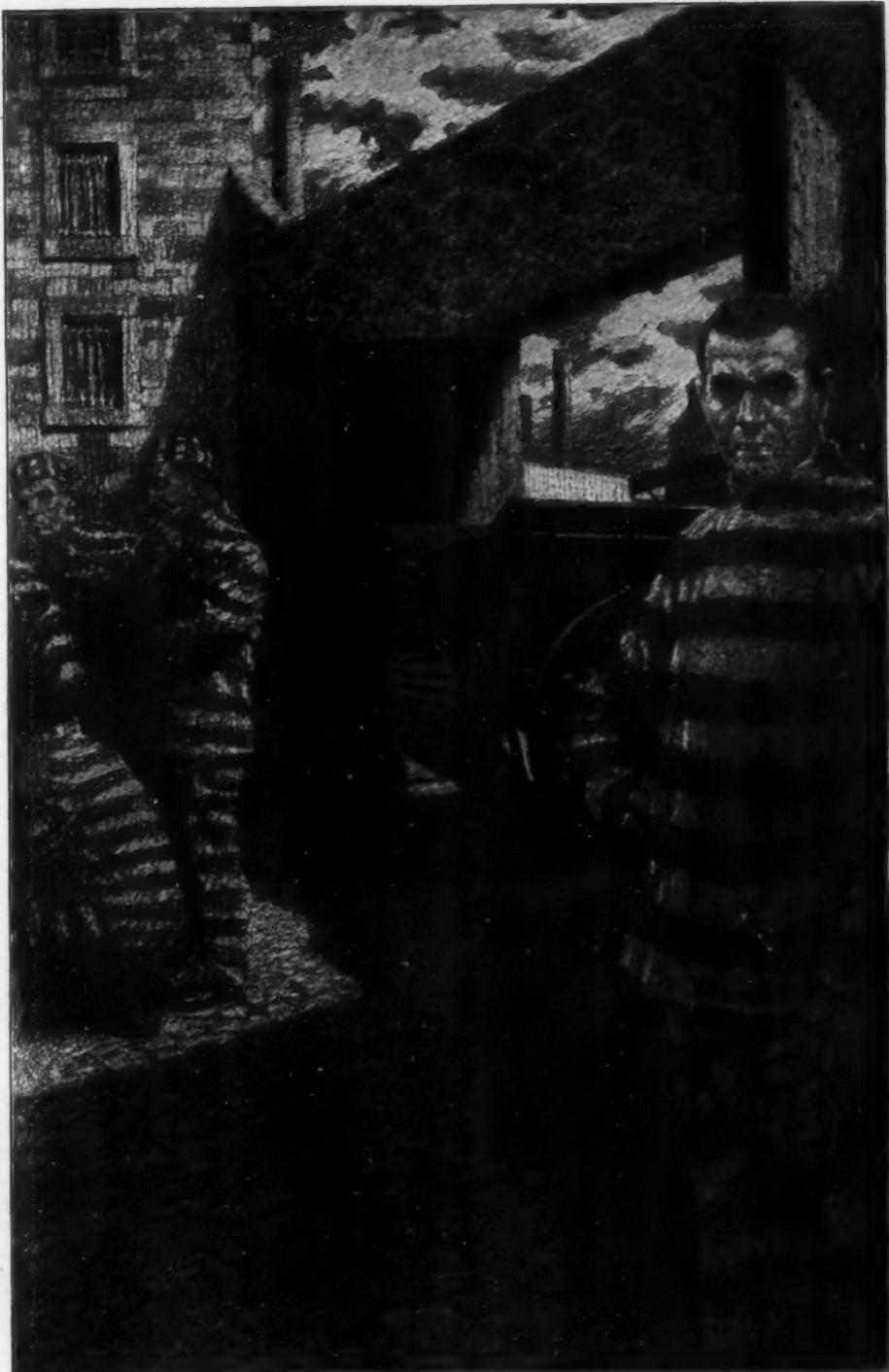
In the morning he made the trip up the river. The plain-clothes inspector let him sit by the window, let him look out at the flying cornfields. The "fly cop" was a pretty good sort of a skate. But it wouldn't do to let him see it. Storke casually asked him his name. That made two names he must never forget. But he wouldn't kill Fitzpatrick when they let him out.

He puffed at the black cigar the inspector gave him, sullenly, watchful. That was going to be all he would have to do for the next twenty years—watch, and wait. He had forgotten about work. It was something far removed from the pale of his simple calculating. It would have upset the simplicity of his vow had he considered it at all. There were just two things in the world worth while thinking about—patience and O'Leary.

At the prison yard he climbed out of the buggy and looked at the geraniums in front of the warden's red-brick office. It was more like a cottage outside the walls. So Storke, stupid with the reaction, saw the last of the flowers. In another minute they had him caged up. It was the first time.

That night he slept in a steel cage with another cage-man. Neither spoke. Conversation was taboo. The new cage-man stretched his striped length on his cot and listened to the breathing of unseen creatures in confinement. It came along the corridors like a strange, tainted wind, huskily faint. The men of the chain gang were lying back like himself, gasping for free air. The thick wheezing of his cell-mate echoed around their four narrow walls. He envied him his sleep.

Where the clippers of the prison barber had shorn his scalp he was conscious of a drawn, tightening sensation. Its itching began to plague him. After a



He swung under the body of the wagon

while he got up off the hard pallet and crept around on all fours. It was his first tour of investigation.

There wasn't much to be seen. He shook the bars that gave into the corridor gently. They didn't even rattle. Then he ran a sensitive thumb over them, as high and as low as his groping hand would reach. Next he examined the lock. His cell-mate must be an old stager. He hadn't even tried to break out since he had been in that cell. Old staggers never did. Well, they were fools. That was the best he could say of them.

He had plenty of time to get Judge O'Leary. So he went back to his prison bed and slept. That night's sleep did him good. The electric gong awoke him at daybreak and he washed at the tin basin after his cell-mate. He shambled into the lock-step like an expert as the tail of the human gray-and-white centipede moved past his door. A keeper went ahead, unlocking the doors noisily.

But the line itself was silent. It slunk along like a great, whipped reptile, cowed. The awful pallor that men get in captivity was on every sunken face—the empty stare. Those men saw nothing because there was nothing to see. It was even hard to believe that they had once been men. Certainly they were men no longer. They were just cage-men. And there's a difference.

The head of the centipede wriggled out into the young sunlight through the stone arch and headed for the mess-hall. Storke was half-way down the line and as it crossed the yard ahead of him diagonally he saw those in front blinking like owls. Behind stone and steel the cage-men lived, and it was dark. All night they were lucky even to see the tiny pin-head of the single electric bulb the watchman burned. It was hard on a man's nerves, but the cage-man must have none. The daylight makes his eyeballs ache.

The mess-hall was long and low, practically nothing more than a stone shed built over long wooden tables and benches. Storke ate ravenously with the rest, tearing the coarse bread apart in his fingers with guttural noises, gulping

down the water in great, parched swallows.

Once during the frugal meal, one of the cage-men tried to snatch his neighbor's half loaf. Then Storke heard the first word he had heard from a prisoner since his arrival and it was a curse. Gruff laughter drowned out the muttered warning of the guard. Then silence again save for the crunching of teeth and guzzling. Such was feeding time in the penitentiary.

Storke was put to work in the carpenter shop, nailing packing cases together. After he nailed the lids on they were carried through a doorway by two other convicts into the shoe shop, where they were packed and sent outside. Storke became obsessed by the sensation that he was being watched craftily, not alone by the guards. Once he turned too quickly, and it was one of his fellow cage-men who was just shifting his glance.

It served to make him vicious at first. Was that fellow after O'Leary, too? Well, he'd beat him to it. Perhaps that devil had sentenced him likewise and it made him jealous to see Storke planning to go poaching after his game.

A cage-man was an animal and couldn't understand that which he couldn't touch. Very well. Storke wasn't wholly a cage-man. He could still see, think, reason, if put to it. He needed but one other attribute to make a man of him and that was perspective. He had no conception of the other fellow's rights. But he was studying the other cage-men. He found out why they shunned him. It was because they were suspicious of newcomers among them. That was it—suspicion of the unknown. Every man's hand was against them. Storke hadn't been proven one of their kind.

At noon-time, the prisoners knocked off work and the snake chain formed again to worm its way back to the mess-hall. It was the same at six o'clock, only they didn't return to the shops afterward. The course led to the cell-house with its grim little windows and their iron lattices deep set in cold stone. Then night that seemed to creep in upon the



When the time did come the dogs spotted him in the moonlight

cage-men on the narrow couch in the darkness and choke them with invisible fingers. Storke wanted to scream at their first clutch. But that was before he got hardened to the life.

That was his first day of the seventy-three hundred he had to serve and one day was precisely like another. He knew beforehand that there would be nothing coming to him for good behavior because in twenty long years a cage-man must get many chances to escape and he meant to use every chance that offered.

Even the grudge against Judge O'Leary would have to wait on his escape. He saw that, now that he was on the ground. It seemed years ago since he had ridden on the cars with the kindly Fitzpatrick and he had forgotten him already. The cage life blunts, saps.

He hatched many plans to escape and he could prove that all they needed was the opportunity. But that was what he lacked. The soil was sterile and he didn't progress far enough to take hold of

other problems, solve them. The cage-man's life is too narrow. And when he did break out there was Judge O'Leary to attend to before anything else.

But he was lucky. It was two years and a few odd days before he rode outside the walls. That was practically all there was to it. The cage-men were lounging around the yard, loitering away their Saturday half-holiday out of doors. Storke was over by the great gate when it swung open to allow a team that had left some provisions to drive out.

Like a gray blur he went under the wheels, almost head first. He swung under the body of the wagon and twisted arms and legs around the grease-smeared rear axle. The great, cumbersome wagon creaked ahead, taking Storke with it. He clung there desperately with closed eyes and waited for the alarm. None came. He hadn't been seen.

Where the road ran hard by the river, he let go and rolled into the dirt. A ball of dust, he kept on rolling. Into the

concealing fringe of trees he went. There he rose and stripped.

The river flowed free and strong at his feet. Under that green surface he could hide. The deep, cool tide went by where he stood with scarcely a ripple. This was his, all his for the taking. He was free. With a suppressed, exultant cry he dived under, sporting down there in an abandon of joy. He was alive again.

When he came up, it was to take the soapy wash of an excursion steamer city-bound. She was all a-flutter with flags and a band was playing on her upper deck. The strains of the music came back to the cage-man and he cocked an ecstatic ear. In the old days he had never cared much for music, but that was when he had always heard it for the listening. He hadn't heard any for two years back now, and he was appreciating everything sensitively. Suddenly he raised his head out of the water and sniffed at an aroma borne to him on the wind. It came from that excursion boat. Corned-beef and cabbage! He struck out for the steamer in a veritable frenzy for food.

But the next instant his old friend, the water, cooled his ardor, saved him from his folly. It would be suicide for him to attempt to board that boat. He was nude, head shaven. Besides, it was too near the prison to show himself. But he kept that river craft in sight.

He clung to her wake like a hungry shark. The really vile odor of the cooking took him on and on to the point of physical exhaustion. He turned on his back and let himself float, resting. And by and by he returned to shore—without his corned-beef and cabbage dinner.

He sat down to dry and leaned his back against a tree. One need was vital. Somewhere, somehow, he must get coat and trousers. On second thought he decided that he preferred a cap. If he could choose he would have selected one many sizes too large for him. He could pull a cap like that down over his ears. It would cover up his shaven head completely. No one would know him for a cage-man then.

Since it was easier to walk on the

land than to swim in the water, he kept ashore all that afternoon. He had degenerated since he had put himself upon his own resources. He was more a cage-beast than a cage-man now. Pretty soon the simile would be complete. They would be hunting him down like a wild thing. So he sulked in the woods, naked as any animal, and waited for the chase to come up.

Nightfall found him crawling through a cornfield, eyes savagely bent on the near by farmhouse. A trifle earlier he had crouched down on his haunches and eaten some of the raw green corn. Also he had broken a stout hickory club for himself. But he was still naked, his body bleeding from twenty scratches against briars and sharp twigs.

Nearing the last row of silk-plumed stalks, he sat down patiently to wait. There was a light in the sitting-room of the farmhouse. He was waiting for that light to go out. Once or twice a man and woman moved in front of it, blotting it out. But the deteriorated cage-man was too foxy to be fooled that way.

Yet when the time did come, the dogs spotted him in the moonlight. He flung his club at them and took to his heels. At an upper window the awakened farmer leaned out and emptied a shotgun at him. Storke turned at the edge of the cornfield and shook his fist.

In the morning the whole countryside would be in full cry, tracking him. But that one night alone he repeated his experience three times. Always it was the dogs that baffled him, always it would be the dogs. From the prison back there, would come bloodhounds for him.

He felt the fear of the hunted creeping in on him from all sides. Not a moment could he doze. He knew no peace, no respite. Once he looked down a rocky declivity and saw a party of men and boys on the road below, dogs ahead, muzzles to earth. He backed out of sight and ran for his life.

He was mortally afraid to venture down into the farm lands any more for food. The country was too open; the cordon was drawing tighter. Why, he couldn't go anywhere. Apparently he



The head that emerged from between two jolting empties was not prepossessing

was as good as re-taken. And the trap was sure to spring when he least expected it. That made him redouble his caution.

And then like a windfall the unexpected happened. He came out of the woods on a lonely stretch of railroad. A long-drawn-out, melancholy whistle wailed to his ears. He crouched down lower. Wheezing and coughing, the locomotive came into view, dragging a long string of freight cars up the grade. The cage-man jumped that train where a brakeman walked the running boards on the roof all unsuspecting of danger. He clung to a brake rod like a great, hairy

gorilla. Then gathering himself, he took to the iron ladder and climbed upward.

The head that emerged from between the ends of two jolting empties was not prepossessing. On the jowls was a week's growth of beard; the lips snarling back from yellow teeth. The brakeman yelled when he saw it and took frantically to his heels. But the cage-man, half crazed from hunger, was after him in great leaps that could not be denied.

Storke throttled him from behind with one hand, the other gripping a brake wheel to keep them both from toppling into the ditch.

Not a murmur from him as the rail-

road man's knees weakened. Storke let him down easily and sat on his chest while he carefully choked the rest of the life out of him. The convict worked deftly. He calmly stripped his victim and pushed him overboard.

Then he donned the wearing apparel. Most of all he took pride in the heavy, peaked cap. Though it was spring, he let the ear flaps down. Renewed confidence intoxicated him, made him reckless. He rode boldly into the city on top of those cars, taking the brakeman's place. But he kept away from the caboose and went hungry.

He had killed a man. If they got him now it would be the chair and no mistake. But they weren't going to get him. He was going to elude them. He would have no time to fix O'Leary though. He must steer clear of all men or they would catch him and send him back. Yes, if that happened it would mean death by electricity because he had killed a man; they electrocuted murderers.

But where could he go? He had made himself more of an outcast than ever. He was of the clan of the cage-men still. He had committed himself irrevocably to their cause. And why not? He was one of them. But where could he go?

An odd idea occurred to him, persisted. He would go back and tell that silent cell-mate all about it. But that meant capture, death. Still the idea persisted. No appeal to his reason could dislodge it. And he was glad to see how loyally it behaved. He didn't fool himself. He saw what was the matter. He was a cage-man. He wanted suddenly to go back! Why not? And yet it was inexplicable, preposterous. But was it, was it?

The cage-man debated that. Prison wasn't such an awful hole, after all. And it probably wouldn't hurt much when they turned the current on. Anyway, he was tired, so tired! He didn't know exactly what to do with his freedom. There was no place to which he could take it to enjoy it. Out here in the world there was too much responsibility.

On the other hand, the cage-men led

a simple life with nothing to fret them. Theirs was a clear conscience! Nobody could pester them. Threats could not alarm them. They could look every man in the face—because the worst had been proven. Yes, it was an easy life. He hadn't slept in a bed for a week. There were both bed and board at the penitentiary. And it meant another trial for him, probably six months before the death watch in his cell that last night.

By noon he was well on his way. He struck a small town and asked his bearings from a passer-by on the main street in broad daylight. Nobody had recognized him. But it gave him no thrill. He had lost all zest for getting away. It was too much work. And he wanted to see those old pals of his, the cage-men, again. He struck into a merry whistle.

The searchers hadn't found his convict garb. It was identically where he had flung it the week before. He undressed and drew it on and discovered that he was comfortable for the first time in many hours. He had nothing to conceal now. He was garbed in his true colors. Proudly erect, he marched out into the open, dressed for his old work in the shops.

He knocked at the warden's cottage door and told him the world outside held nothing for him. The warden listened to his story, nodding. So Storke confessed to murder? That would be life imprisonment. For a moment the cage-man failed to comprehend. Then it dawned on him burstingly.

The gaunt sockets of his eyes filled with tears that ran down his cheeks in streams. He couldn't thank the warden enough. Why, he had a good home for life, good pals, too, who never bothered you! It was great. Storke was genuinely happy for the first time in his hard young life.

Just as he was led out into the old, familiar yard the chain-gang was winding through the little arch of the cell-house entrance. Storke paused proudly and waved his hand to the line, calling:

"Hello, boys! Save me a place in the line, wont you? I couldn't stay away."

The Father

BY RALPH W. GILMAN

Author of "The Whittler," "Burkett's Banty," etc.

DO you think that he will come back—soon?"

The woman's voice was eager, wistful, almost despairing. She stood with her back to the wall, one hand hidden under her gingham apron, the other held to her cheek, and gazed across the little red-clothed supper table at the man opposite.

Her husband shoved back his plate, and wiped his mustache nervously. The boy—would he come? That was the sharp interrogation that was gnawing at his own heart—that had been gnawing there for these weeks and weeks. He had tried to be brave, not to show it, to be optimistic, for the woman's sake. But the task was well nigh beyond him. Tonight, with the whistle and clamor and clatter of the yards in his ears, it seemed that he could be so no longer—not even for her. His big blue eyes evaded the brown, questioning ones and swept across the room. There, on top of the sewing machine, was a stack of school-books wrapped with a leather strap, and a baseball glove. His lips twitched.

"John, tell me that he will!" The woman had come closer.

The six o'clock whistles were shrieking from a hundred factories and shops. The man pushed back his chair, and arose. Big, broad-shouldered, slightly gray, bare-armed, he came around the table and took the woman in his arms. She wept on his shoulder.

"Yes. He will come back—soon. I believe it."

The whistles died away. He slowly released her, put on his cap and coat, picked up his lantern and dinner pail, and went out of the door. His eyes were oddly moist; a heavy swelling was in his throat, and he did not dare trust

himself to say good-by. The woman stood at the door, wiping her eyes on her apron.

Would the boy come? The question rang in his ears. He heard it above the toot of the switch engines, the bang of the coupling cars, the shouting of the yardmen. It was in his ears as he said hello to the grimy shopmen flocking homeward. It was in his thought as he nodded to the towerman at the "goose-neck." It still sounded in his ears as he came out from the overhead viaduct, walked across the first span of the long, black, river bridge, and climbed the twisting iron stairs that led up to the hoisting house on the top of the draw. Would he come?

The day tender met him at the door of the house. He had his dinner bucket and coat. He was on his way home.

"It's going to be a bad night," he remarked, gazing at the sky. "Wid the fog, it'll be lucky if they all stay on the rails, and none of the boats butt their brains out on the piers below."

"Yes, a bad night."

But Dermott was thinking more of "Toots" than of the weather. In his six years as tender of the draw, he had seen all kinds of weather. But in his forty years of life, he had only had one such pang as the present. What was weather to Toots?

He put his dinner bucket on the shelf behind the little round coal stove, hung his coat and hat on a nail beside it, pulled the arm-chair with the black hair cushion in its bottom and the glass insulators on its legs to the window, put his feet on the sill and looked out into the falling night. A hundred feet below him, the brown river gurgled and boiled against the piers, then swept on between

willow-lined banks in a fading, brown crescent, to the southward. The stream was at flood, and the scattered string of house-boats and miscellaneous craft rocked to and fro at their anchorage. The channel lights were already lit, and glowing faintly. From the river, he turned toward the west. There were the yards, smoky, clamorous, with their red and green switch lights, beginning to twinkle. Beyond them was the city, its skyscrapers, spires, and chimneys capping the bluff. A soft drizzle had begun to splash against the windows, and a mist to gather in the willow bottoms across the stream. As McCarty had said, it would be a bad night. The *Magnolia* would pass at nine-twenty; the mail packet would leave at two-thirty. He would have to lift the draw for them. That would be his night's work.

He gazed on the darkening landscape, and thought of Toots. It was on just such a night as this, that he had left. He had come in from school, tossed his ball-glove and books on the floor, seized a slice of bread and meat from the cupboard and rushed out again. Donny, the carman's boy, had met him at the gate. They had gone toward the yards together. Later in the night, Bobby, Donny's brother, had dropped in to say that Toots was going to stay at their house that night, and would go from there to school on the morrow. The next afternoon Bobby appeared again, bearing a note. Dermott remembered every word of it, could see before his eyes the paper with the fateful lines scrawled on it:

Dear Dad:

The school's getting fierce. Donny and me can't stand it no more. We are going to beat it west. Donny's got enough money for feedings. We'll get a good job, and write back.

Toots.

P. S. I wouldn't have done it, if you'd have let me be call-boy.

That was all.

How well the father understood it: the growing boy with his desire to do something, now that the other boys were quitting school—McConnel's Ted checking baggage, Rimmel's boy at a tele-

rapher's key, Roy Hanson wiping engines at the round-house. Toots had wanted to be a call-boy, and work up to train-master. But he had opposed it; he wanted him to stay in school. He had had no schooling himself. He wanted his boy to have a better start in life than he had had. It was natural that Toots, raised in the yards, so to speak, and seeing and hearing the trains, should wish to follow them, have some part in the wonderful life; but how it hurt to have him go that way. And how silent and empty and dreary and death-like it had since been at home. He almost dreaded to go home nowadays. The boy's mother was eating her heart out with grief.

It had been only two months, but it seemed like a year. They had heard from him but once. Their letter in reply asking him to come back and be call-boy, if he wished, had been returned unclaimed. They did not know where he was, what he was doing. They had spent what cash they had, two hundred dollars, in trying to find him. They had advertised in papers, paid detectives, sent letters, and called upon police departments. But with no effect. The chief of the local detective department had held out the hope that by a proper, systematic search he could be found. But such a search would cost a great deal of money—a sum that was prohibitive.

The man looked out into the misty night—now black save for the channel lights, the switch lights, and the dull glow of the city—and bent his head with grief. An incoming freight from the west whistled for the bridge. He showed a clear track, and the long string of black and red and yellow cars with the cupaledo caboose at its tail, swayed by with a rumble, and disappeared into the yards.

Dermott watched it vanish with a sadness at his heart. Perhaps somewhere, miles off, Toots was riding on such a train. He never saw a freight pass any more but he thought of it. Toots had gone away in such a fashion. And he never saw a boy clamber off from one but that he strained his eyes to see if it

were Toots. He felt that he would come back that way. And whenever he could, he called the wayfaring boy up into his house and questioned him, inquired if he had seen Toots anywhere. Many a time he had given up his lunch-bucket to some hungry boy for Toots' sake; and many a homeless lad he had let sleep curled up by his fire on a bad night. But with all his questioning, he had learned nothing. They got no word, and he came not.

Down in the yards, a flickering, blue shaft of light cut long avenues through the mist, and an engine called madly. It was the continental flyer clearing for her sixty-mile-an-hour run into the night. He showed a green light, and the black, wet tops of the seven coaches, like the backs of so many big fish fresh from the water, clattered under him, and were soon lost in the night beyond the stream. Other trains passed. The mist thickened, and broke into squalls of rain. The channel lights paled, and twinkled faintly.

At nine-thirty, the *Magnolia's* double-noted whistle called for the draw, and he lifted the span to let her through. He could look right down on the deck at the hands as they crawled about like big ants. From her cabin came the sound of music. Then the song:

I'm going back to Dixie—No more
I'm going to travel—

It was the song of the negro deckhands. The boat was going south on a rising river. They were going home. He closed the draw behind them.

A little later, Duncan, the droll Scotch track-walker, came slowly up the stairs. He shook his dripping hat, set his red flag with the torpedoes clinched about it, in the corner, and dropped into a chair.

"A soggy night," he grumbled. "A soggy night!" Then he filled his pipe.

"And ye've heard naught of the bye?" he asked sympathetically. He knew what was foremost in the tender's thought.

Dermott walked across the room, and stood looking out the window. "Naught," he said brokenly.

"And the police have no word?"

"None—except that for a thousand dollars they could find him."

Duncan smoked for a minute in deep silence. "It's a sma' sum for a cheeld," he remarked. "A sma' sum!"

Dermott turned quickly from the window. His voice was almost angry. "Small when ye've got it, but a mountain when ye've not." Then he came a step nearer, all his father's love and agony struggling in his rough face. "Do you know," he cried, "that at times, I'd do all but murder to bring him back. Lord, but he was close to me!"

"I ken it weel," the track-walker replied. "I've no had six of them for naught. They are on the left side of a body, clost to the blood. And I like ye the better for the plain speech. I've no doot but that the Lord would look leetly upon murder for one av them."

Dermott paced the room a couple of times; then he stopped again at the window. His eyes sought the yards.

"And what's new out yon to-night?" he asked.

Duncan put back his cap, and gathered up his flag.

"A heap," he said. "There's to be an awful extra—the brawest one the road ever saw—two engines afcre, and one beehind, with a hoondred cars between—an' rooning on the time av a mail. She'll go through the draw like a mouse through a cheese. Ye'll have an order aboot her no doot."

"It's no plain to me what it's aw' aboot, but it's the talk of the yard. Two at the city playing wid our bread somehow. One av them says the other can no fetch a half meellion bushels of wheat and dump it into the market by the morn'; the other says he can—that's as near as I can ken. And a hundred thousand in good siller to the one what's on the winning side. It's beyond me. Aw' I'm concerned is that they say they'll interfere to stop her. She's due here between the half hoor of two and three. We've orders to bide by, and look to the sweetches. An' I'll be aboot it."

The Scotchman buttoned up his coat and went down the stairs.

Dermott let a couple of freights by; then there came a blank space in which he sat and glowered into the night. He thought of what Duncan had told him, about the men who played a game with people's bread for a hundred thousand dollars in a night. It was more than his wages for a hundred years. A hundredth part of it would bring back Toots. A bitterness crept into his heart, a bitterness against life, against God, against the railroads. It seemed it was they that had enticed his boy away. It was they that by some hook or crook should bring him back, or furnish the way for it—the money. Give him the chance, and how he would turn against them—how he would make them pay for it.

The telephone jingled. It was the yard-master. The extra, the big double-header freight, would be along at two forty-five. He would see that the draw was down. She would take the bridge at high speed, ten miles an hour. They usually slowed to four.

He hung up the receiver. "But for the crew, I'd be glad to see her go in the ditch," he muttered savagely. "They took him away; they should bring him back."

Silent, brooding, with hate in his heart against the company, he sat looking out at the flickering channel lights, the blur of the switches, and the flare of the city's arcs. There was a step on the stair. Duncan, he thought, and wiped his eyes. He did not wish even him to see his agony. It was too intimate, too deep, for exhibition; it was a fierce hunger that welled up mixed with hate—hate for the taker away of the child—the railroad. But instead of the track-walker, it was a stranger, a gray, elderly, well-dressed man, in a rain coat, a cigar between his teeth. He shook the rain from his garments, and nodded.

"A bad night!"

"Yes. A bad night." Dermott was short.

As if he hadn't noticed the rebuff, the stranger took off his hat, shook it, and sat down. For a minute he was silent. His eyes, however, searched the room busily—the winding drums, the

levers, the telephone, Dermott himself. Ordinarily such a gaze would have made the tender flinch, but to-night, because of the bitterness in his heart, he was bold. He was about to ask the visitor what he wanted, when the man spoke:

"There will be an extra through to-night," he said abruptly.

Dermott nodded. "Between two and three—two-forty-five."

"Loaded with grain."

"A half-million bushels of it."

"And she'll go across the bridge against speed orders?"

"Yes—scheduled at ten miles."

The stranger got up and walked to the window, looked down at the girders, the trusses, the black water, then turned his gaze up the stream. The North Star packet was loading for her down trip. Her lights glowed in broken, flickering streaks across the water. She would leave at twenty minutes past two; at half-past she would pass through the draw. She carried passengers, and had equal rights with the trains; Dermott always gave her the draw. The stranger pointed toward the boat.

"She'll have the draw?" he asked.

Dermott shook his head. "Extra against her."

The stranger walked again to the window, and stood with his hands in his pockets, looking first cityward at the pale glow of the lights on the dun sky, then down at the bridge and the two bright rows of steel that died away in the night. He seemed to be pondering something. Dermott, in whose thoughts little Toots still held joint sway with his anger against the railroad, wished his visitor would go; the man was an intruder into his thoughts. Finally the man turned, walked to the little table, took a huge roll of bills from his pocket, and silently spread them out, weighting each one down with a gold-piece. Of big denominations they were—fifties and hundreds. The table was covered.

Dermott's eyes glistened. It was more money than he had ever seen in one pile. A jealousy, a greed, a money hunger seized him. He began to think what he could do with it—how he could bring

Toots back. He felt like seizing the pile and running—like grabbing the man by the neck and strangling him, like striking him with the stove poker. An animal brutality awoke in him, and showed in his features. It was as if the money had maddened him; he could not take his eyes away from it. He could think of nothing beside its possession—of what it would do for Toots.

The stranger watched the surge of Dermott's emotions.

"And what would you do to have it—to pick it up, to carry it away, to use it as you please?"

"Do?" Dermott's voice was tense, savage. "I'd do all but murder! And I might do that!"

The stranger smiled. "It's yours for less than that."

"For what?" Dermott's breath was coming heavy, like that of a foundered animal. He leaned forward.

The stranger pointed to the draw. "For forgetting to close that," he said, "between two-thirty and three."

Dermott stared at him. "But the extra," he exclaimed. "She'll be along, and she'll be looking for the bridge!"

"I know it."

"And she'll go—"

"Yes, she'll go through." Cool, unmoved, the stranger finished his thought.

Dermott glared at him. "Go away, man!" he cried hoarsely. But his eyes were still on the money. A horrible greed was on his face. With all that, he could find Toots; he could quit the drudging night work that was sapping his life; he could live like a man.

"But it would be murder!" he protested. "There will be men on it!"

"They'll jump," the stranger replied. "It will be only engines and cars, company property. What did the company ever do for you?" His voice breathed deep sarcasm.

Do for him? The words maddened the tender. That was what he had been asking all the night. They had done nothing for him but what was ill-taken his boy away, robbed him of his sleep, almost of his life. That was what they had done.

The stranger watched the rush of passion, and touched the money. "Count it," he said. "See if it's all there—five thousand! See if it's enough for a night's work—for forgetting, the way other men have done—for a mistake."

Dermott stared at the outspread bills—blindly, madly, stupidly. It seemed like a dream—like one of those horrible dreams where you wake from gathering gold coins in a bucket to the awful, gnawing poverty of real life. He was not sure but that it really was a dream, and that he would awake to find the stranger gone, the money evaporated. His head whirled. He weakened—fell. "Hand it up!" he cried, stretching out his hand. "Hand it up! I'd go to hell for it!"

The rain still fell, gently, softly. The clock ticked, ticked, and the hands crept slowly along. Ten minutes past two—twenty—twenty-five. The bells of the packet struck. A shower of sparks poured upwards from her funnels; her paddle-wheels beat the water; her double-noted whistle called for the draw. Up in the little house high over the swirling waters, above the thin span that hung like a great spider-web in the black night, a big, blue-eyed man, with a face that glared horribly, held one hand over a bulging pocket, and with the other moved a lever. The draw rose in the air. The boat passed through. The clock ticked on.

Half-past two—two-thirty-five—two-forty. Off in the blackness of the west, a pale, blue glimmer of light flickered through the wet night—flickered and died away. The sullen rush and lap of running water arose above the soft patter of the rain. The far-off clatter of the yards, the toot of a whistle, the ringing of a bell, the grinding noise of bumping cars, came through the heavy air and mingled with the sound of the water's rush. The man in the little house looked blindly, vacantly out into the night. He seemed to see nothing—to feel nothing, to know nothing. His face was set, and rigid. With one hand on the hoisting lever, he sat and stared. The clock ticked loudly.

Two-forty-two. The blue flicker reappeared. It was an eye now, a fierce eye that searched the night. Far behind it, the two little green lights of the caboose swept along. The man at the window watched it. With a growing rumble, the train rushed on. A bright red light in a high tower over the track turned to green before it. The engine answered with two sharp blasts, and swept by. Then it whistled again, four long whistles. It was calling for the bridge. The man in the house pulled a lever. A green light appeared at the bridge's approach, the signal for a clear track. The headlight grew, swelled. Long, flickering sword-blades of blue-white light swept the waters, revealed trees, telegraph poles.

The engine rounded the curve to the bridge's approach, passed the signal light, and rumbled out upon the steel. The rails glimmered and glinted before it like two fiery paths, ending in blackness. Giant shadows, like giant limbs rushed across the house, and fled into the night. The man in the tower watched it all, the rumbling, roaring train, the lights, the shadows. But he was no longer human.

The train rattled on. One span, two spans—there were only three more—then blackness. Then, all at once, the engine screamed. The long string of cars began to surge and sway wildly; fire flew from a hundred tightening brake shoes; startled faces appeared at the gangways.

Until now, Dermott had stared down at it all with unchanging eyes, his features white and death-like, his body motionless. But now that he saw those faces, those small, slim figures of the men on the train, his imagination flashed into swift activity. All at once, he realized that probably not all of them would have time to jump—safely; the engineers, too, might think it their duty, for the sake of the others, to stick by their brake-levers. They were of his kind, these men and boys of the train crew—fathers, like himself, or sons of fathers—like Toots. It was these tiny, struggling figures down there that called to him—called to Toots' father.

Turning quickly, Dermott sprang to his levers and in instant response, the span began to drop. At that, a dark figure that had been lurking just outside the door, threw it open and interposed a protesting hand. It was the stranger in the gray rain-coat.

With a hoarse growl, Dermott flung the man roughly back against the wall; jerking the bulging roll of money from his own pocket, the bridge tender thrust it into the hand of the stranger and abruptly pushed him out the door. Then without another glance, he whirled about and leaned out the window again.

The span was just closing. It struck the piers with a bang. And it closed in time. The groaning, grinding engines passed over it with a hollow roar; the squealing, protesting cars followed. Part in the yards, part on the bridge, it stopped.

Up in the house, the big, blue-eyed tender sat with his head buried between his hands at the table. A bearded, wet Scotch track-walker tried to soothe him.

"Mon! Mon! But it was a close shave!" he babbled. "But ye did it handsome. Ye'll no sleep again! God, but it's an aw' night! An aw' night! Down below I passed a mon in a gray coat that had been takin' shelter under the stairs belike. He looked as though the rain had sort o' fasht him like."

The rain pattered on, softly, gently. The big tender's head still lay buried in his hands. He had saved the train, but he had lost the boy—lost the money which would have found him.

"Toots! Why don't you come home?" he sobbed brokenly.

A blast of wind rattled a window. Under cover of it, a figure appeared noiselessly in the doorway, the figure of a slight and tattered youth, grimy with dust and dirt, who had dropped from the train when it came to a halt on the bridge.

The boy ran forward with outstretched arms.

"Daddy! Daddy!" he cried. "I've come back!"



Their pocket lamps showed them that the victim was Busso

Il Gran' Signor

Solid Ivory Engages the Black Hand

BY JOHN A. MOROSO

Author of the "Solid Ivory" Stories

ILLUSTRATED BY JAY HAMBIDGE

I

WHEN the news was flashed under the ocean from the headquarters of the *Carabaniere* in Palermo to McCafferty in Mulberry Street that the *Camorrista* had slain Petrosino, Busso was sent for.

He was no ordinary stool pigeon, Busso. He was a man of thought and education. The information he gave the police was given with the spirit of a spy who was at the same time a patriot. He wanted to aid in putting an end to blackmail upon the people of his old country, blackmail forced by murder, wreckage, kidnaping and torture.

So Busso, who had known Alvano, the

head of the *Camorrista* in Sicily, and knew his friends in New York, began to work for McCafferty in order that the first open lead to the murderers of Petrosino might be broken open. It was certain that the plot to rid the *Mano Nera* of its formidable foe had been hatched in New York, perhaps in the shadow of old police headquarters.

Busso went forth on his mission.

A week passed without a word from him and then came a report over the telephone that a murder had been committed and that the body of the murdered man was in the hallway of a Baxter Street tenement. The policeman reported that the body was propped up-

right against the wall with sticks, a poniard driven clear through the heart and into the woodwork.

Vacchris and two of his associates in the Italian squad were detailed from headquarters and their pocket electric lamps showed them in a flash that the victim was Busso.

The body was found late on the night of the feast of San Rocco. But the *festa* was ended and Little Italy had retired save for the few tavern keepers still busy at the task of removing the empty Chianti and Barbera bottles that cluttered their places.

The murder of Busso was no ordinary murder, so far as the police system was concerned. To the Italian squad it was as if a member of the family had been slain. Vacchris was quick to reach McCafferty on the telephone, and the gray-haired chief of Central Office answered with his own presence as fast as a subway train could bring him down town from his home.

The detectives had prevented entrance to the tenement with sundry excuses. A small crowd of the people of the night had gathered, only to be rapped on the shins with night sticks and dispersed. The police would keep the matter to themselves.

McCafferty reached the entrance to the tenement. His face was flushed and his gray mustache seemed to bristle as he appeared before the men on the job.

"Where is the body?" he asked.

"Right here in the entrance," replied Vacchris, the senior member of the Italian staff.

"A light," commanded the inspector. "Quick—a light!"

The dark mouth of the tenement entrance was immediately cut with shafts of electric light from the pocket batteries.

McCafferty, very much alive and very angry, faced Busso, dead and pinned to the wall.

"A very nice night's work," said McCafferty, bitterly. Then his voice caught. He was ready to sob or swear.

In a few moments he recovered himself and gave his orders.

"Take him down," he said. "Leave the knife in his heart. D'you understand? Take him out of this hall and let him lie on the stoop. I never saw the man before."

"It's Busso, chief!" exclaimed one of the detectives.

"I never saw this man before and you never either—do you get me?"

The men had taken the props from the body of the informer and had dragged it to the stoop.

"Now listen," commanded the inspector. "We don't figure in this at all. This murder has nothing to do with the murder of Petrosino as far as the papers go. We don't want to scare anybody off, y'understand? It is a plain case of a fight in Baxter Street. Tip off the uniformed force on that line. Say nothing about the body being pinned to the wall. Keep your mouths shut on that. Some Wop in this tenement is under suspicion by the Black Hand and that is why the body was pinned here. He may or may not have seen it. The man we want to get as informer is the man under suspicion and who was to be taught a lesson by the death of Busso."

McCafferty was out on the sidewalk. He paced up and down in front of the closed butcher shop beside the tenement entrance.

"One of you men get a complete list of every man, woman and child living in this tenement," he ordered and then started for headquarters.

II

"Listen."

Tierney stood before his chief, stupid in so far as dull blue eyes and set features may show stupidity.

"Yes, chief," he replied. "I got yer."

"We are going to land the man who killed Busso, and there are going to be two lines of operation," McCafferty declared. "You are going to be the goat for a while."

"Har?" exclaimed Tierney involuntarily.

"Yes; I want you to handle this case in the police courts whenever arrests are

made, and I want you to produce evidence to show that it was just an ordinary vendetta or quarrel on the night of the San Rocco drunk. In the meanwhile, we are going to work under cover with the Italian detectives. If you get any real lead you don't want to show it in court. And above all things stall the newspaper gang. If the boys across the street get an idea that the murder of Busso has anything to do with the murderer of Petrosino they will shadow every man we send on the case."

"Yes, sir."

"You've got me now, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

Tierney saluted and started for the door of the inspector's office. He paused on the threshold.

"What is it?" demanded McCafferty.

"While I'm stalling, chief," Tierney asked, "I may get as busy as I can on the quiet—yes?"

"I expect you to give night and day to this job."

Tierney went his way prepared to play the goat, but with the determination to get in at the death in this man-hunt if he could do so without violating his orders.

The Italian squad was already waiting to be admitted to the inspector's office. It followed Tierney to receive orders.

"What do you think of it now, Vacchris?" asked the inspector of the senior detective.

"Well, sir," replied the detective, "Busso was suspected of giving us information. His death was fixed. This murder would have the effect of frightening possible witnesses in the Petrosino case. At least, if there was a weak man in the circle that plotted his death, the presence of the dead body of Busso on his doorstep, greeting him upright with a stiletto through his heart, would bring him closer in the circle. Then, as I believe also, there is some one in that house in Baxter Street who is in the circle of men who decreed the death of Petrosino and arranged for it to come off in the square at Palermo."

"We must get men and probably a

woman located gradually in that house so that every tenant can be sounded and all the gossip sifted," McCafferty said. "Now you attend to that, Vacchris. I think you had better get in some new stools. The old informers are getting to be known and we'll have more murderers to worry us if they are spotted in this case."

The men rose from their chairs.

"Is there anything else, chief?" asked their spokesman.

"Let me see," half mused McCafferty. "It has been over ten years since I did an outside piece of work and then it was on an Italian case and I did most of the work in Italy; didn't I, Vacchris?"

"You did, sir, and you surprised us with the fine Italian you spoke when you came back," said Vacchris with a smile.

"And I have kept up the study of it too," laughed the inspector. "By thunder, I feel as if I could get on this job with you! Maybe I shall. Now get busy and if we can get a hint as to the man we want you might find the chief trying himself out again on the street."

The men departed and McCafferty began studying the list of names of tenants in the Baxter Street house.

"What's this!" he exclaimed suddenly. "Giovanni Baptista Mentone! My old bootblack, as I live, and his son Pietro! I will have my shoes shined once more."

The inspector hurried from his office.

III

The exit of the old Brooklyn Bridge, which arches Park Row and sends in a white ribbon of delight thousands of niftily clad working women downstairs and into the winding paths of City Hall Park, was creaking under its burden.

It was in the early Maytime and about the municipal buildings were beds of tulips, spreading gloriously.

The sun was shining, making the morning crystalline and cool.

Everybody was whistling or humming an air. The girls stepped sappily. The men slapped their thighs with their folded morning papers. The sparrows

in the grass plots twittered and began the Maytime courting.

Giovanni Baptista drew back from the path of all this rout of youth and springtime. He was old and yellow of skin. Over his lean left arm swung a bit of flannel cloth and in his right hand was a stubble brush. His bulwark against this tidal wave of humanity was a boot-black chair, perched high on a stand.

"*Buon' giorno, amico mio,*" sounded in greeting behind him.

Giovanni Baptista turned, his parchment-like skin wrinkling into a smile of pleasure. His little black eyes kindled.

"*Buon' giorno, signor: come sta?*"

"Very well, thank you, Giovanni Baptista," was the reply of the man greeting him, as he stepped lightly to the stand and took his seat.

"And how are you, my friend?" he asked, placing his walking stick across his knees.

"I, signor? I not so well. I feel seeck."

"Sick and on this beautiful day?"

Giovanni Baptista made pretence of removing dust from his patron's freshly pressed gray trousers.

"Beautiful day," said the patron, changing the subject.

"*Giorno bello,*" echoed the bootblack in his lovelier tongue. He began his work and soon had a high polish on one shoe.

But a drop of water fell on the toe and it had to be flicked off and more paste rubbed in with more polishing.

Twice this thing happened.

The well dressed patron of the Italian in the chair noticed it.

The shoe was finally polished and work was started on the other. Twice again came drops of water to mar the polish. And then the shoe was finished and Giovanni began brushing the spotlessly clean trousers.

The bootblack's patron left the chair and drew a coin from his pocket.

"What is the matter, Giovanni Baptista?"

The old Italian hung his head. His eyes were wet. His tears had spoiled his work twice on each shoe.

"*Signor, I feela seeck,*" was the reply.

The well dressed man switched his trousers with his cane a bit impatiently.

"You're not sick," he said curtly. "You're in trouble. Tell me what is the matter. I may be able to help you."

"No, *signor,*" the Italian replied, his voice subdued.

"Well then, you lose a customer and a friend. *Buon' giorno.*"

He turned and started toward the City Hall.

"*Signor,*" called the bootblack. "*Signor! Amico mio!* My friend!"

Giovanni Baptista's patron turned in response to the call.

"Well? Now tell me what is the trouble," he demanded. "My time is limited."

Giovanni put a withered and tired hand upward as if he would touch the fine raiment of this splendid gentleman.

"*Signor,*" he began, his thin voice quavering, "it is my boy Pietro. The police have him in da prison."

"What for?"

"*Il Mano Nera della Morte.*"



Giovanni Baptista Mentone

"The Black Hand of Death!" the gentleman echoed under his breath.

"Is he as bad as that?" he asked aloud.

"No, *signor*; he is witness. If he testify against da Black Hand he ees kill. If he don' testify, *signor*, he ees kep' in da jail."

"How old is the boy?"

"He's just a leetla boy," whined Giovanni.

"How old is he?"

"Twenty-five, *signor*."

"When was he arrested, this little boy twenty-five years old?"

"He ees my only boy, *signor*," the bootblack half sobbed.

"When was he arrested?" demanded his elegant friend.

"Las' night, *signor*."

"What station was he taken to?"

"To da bigga place in Mulberry Street."

"Ah, police headquarters."

Giovanni was weeping now as the gay city cavalcade swept by, as the tulips spread beautifully and as the sun glis- tened on his well worn coat.

"I will try to help you," said this grand person who daily called his bootblack "*amico mio*."

"*Signor!*" came in a grateful cry from the lips of the old Italian.

But the grand friend had turned and was lost in the lively stream of humanity.

IV

For six days Giovanni looked in vain for his friend, the *gran' signor*. At first his heart was fairly bursting with grati-



A week passed before the *gran' signor* returned. He wore heavy, green glasses.

tude, for on the very night of the day he had told of the plight of Pietro the boy had come home to him.

None other than the *gran' signor* could have accomplished this, Giovanni felt certain. Pietro knew nothing of the manner of his release from the Tombs. He had been turned out of a cell and told to "beat it." He had beaten it in leaps and bounds of joy and anticipation of a heaping dish of spaghetti, a bottle of Chianti and bread with gorgonzola.

Then the continued absence of his friend and patron began to prey on the mind of the old bootblack. He scanned every one of the myriad faces that swept by his stand in the little park. As he polished shoes he craned his neck and twisted and writhed frightfully in an effort to inspect the faces of the throng.

The seventh day was Sunday. Giovanni Baptista's stand was, of course, stowed away in the basement of the city hall. But he went to the park anyhow and watched and waited and hoped.

The eighth day came, gray and drizzly. The young women and young men, flowing in a great stream from the bridge, were not so gay and sprightly. The drizzle was a bit cold, the wind sharp and claps of thunder sent weird and ponderous echoes reverberating in the great circle of skyscrapers walling the tiny bit of green and the diminutive City Hall.

Giovanni Baptista would have done well to have sought shelter, for people do not have their shoes shined on such mornings. But he remained by his stand, watching the faces, ready to spring forward and kiss the hand of the man who had taken his only boy, his "leetla fel," from the prison.

His patience was rewarded. The *gran' signor* appeared. He smiled his greeting in the same old way, threw back the rubber covering over the chair and, drawing his coat tighter about his ears, said that he would have his shoes shined and the rubbers cleaned inside and out; he asked Giovanni if he was well.

The hands of Giovanni trembled as he drew off the rubbers. He wanted to speak but in his throat the sobs of grati-

tude piled high and chokingly. The drizzle had become finer and the wind had died down. Above the little clear space in the mountains of iron and steel and stone, which make New York's famous skyline shape like the under jaw of a shark, the clouds began to scud Jersey-ward. Soon came a dazzling shaft of sunlight.

The sparrows began fighting and loving again. The rain on the tulips was turned into jewels of divine splendor. The flags were sent up to the gilded balls of the masts above the City Hall and the World Building. From over on Park Row, stretching north of the old Bridge, the wastrels from scores of drinking places crept in a ragged battalion, eager for benches and cast-off newspapers.

The heart of Giovanni became gladdened. He was literally at the feet of his friend, his good friend, the *gran' signor* who honored him with his kind phrases in his own sweet tongue and tips in good American money.

He had shaken out the dust from inside the rubbers and was rubbing away at the shoes in his artistic preliminaries when he was struck by the fact that the shoes of his patron were worn and old, broken in fact.

Giovanni did not understand. He looked upward and saw that the face of his friend was meditative and that his coat was not so finely pressed as it had been a week before. There was a change. His friend that had been rich was poor.

This was indeed calamity. The bootblack, keenly observant, knew that misfortune had come upon the man who of all men he wished well.

"*Signor*," he said in his thin voice, "my leetla boy is home."

There was no comment from the man in the chair.

"*Signor*," went on Giovanni, "may God bless you and keep you, my gooda friend."

"Oh," exclaimed the bootblack's patron as if coming out of a dream. "What was that?"

"You get my leetla boy out of da jail, *signor*," whined the bootblack.

"Ah, yes. It was nothing; it was very simple. I am glad, Giovanni Baptista."

Giovanni finished his work, brushed the trousers and shoulders of his patron and held out his hand mechanically.

He was paid a nickel instead of the usual dime and he had no opportunity to pretend to give the change willingly.

"*Buon' giorno, amico mio,*" said his patron.

"*Buon' giorno,*" was the reply.

After two days the patron came back. His shoes were more broken and the soles were waferlike. There was very little conversation either in Italian or in English. Giovanni pocketed his nickel and they said "*buon' giorno*" once more.

A full week passed before the *gran' signor* returned to have his shoes shined. He wore heavy green glasses. As he took his seat, he said that he would pay Giovanni the next time.

"I am broke," he said quietly. "I haven't a penny, *amico mio*. The panic in Wall Street has cleaned me out. I am starting all over again—as soon as I can get a start. But my eyes must get better. I can barely see."

The brushes fell from the hands of the old bootblack, clattering on the asphalt.

"*Signor!*" he cried.

"It is true."

"But I have money and it is yours."

The *gran' signor* laughed.

"I could not borrow your money," he said.

"Yes, *signor*; yes, you can," urged Giovanni eagerly. "I have enough money, *amico*. Please, my gooda friend, please—"

Il gran' signor rubbed his forehead reflectively and, clearing his throat, said:

"Giovanni Baptista, I have no home. If you will take me to board and keep my shoes shined and my clothes free of dust I will soon pay you well for it."

"Yes, *signor*," replied the bootblack. "You come stay with me one, two, three, four, five, a million years. You pay any time."

V

An iron gray beard had grown on the jaws of the guest of Giovanni Baptista, Mentone. Weakness came to his limbs as he groped about the tiny tenement apartment of three rooms on Baxter Street between Mulberry Bend and Park Row.

Giovanni's heart was torn. His grand friend was no longer grand. He was as if cast from among the rich and mighty to grovel with the poor and the humble. Then in the kindness of his heart he took him to his bootblack stand in the Park on sunny days.

On such days, Giovanni soon discovered, his receipts increased. The sight of the blind man with iron gray, straggly beard and shabby clothes but always with well polished, if battered and tattered, shoes touched the hearts of many in the throng. Instead of being an incubus *il gran' signor* was proving an



Pietro

asset. He placed a tin cup beside the foot rests of his stand and soon came the musical shower of small coins against the metal receptacle.

Il gran' signor made no complaint.

Pietro, an idler, was called into service to guide the decrepit and one time splendid friend of his father. *Signor* could not stand many hours of the sun and rain. So Pietro was employed in dragging him about in sheltered places such as honeycomb the Italian quarter north of City Hall Park and west of Park Row, the little taverns where any honest beggar may find a chair, a free glass of *vino California* and pennies from sympathetic patrons.

Pietro would drag him here and there during an afternoon, believing himself secure in the fact that the old man could not see and believing the tale his father had told him that he had been a fine Italian gentleman.

It was the pride of the *gran' signor* that made him insist with Giovanni that nothing should be told of his palmy days, not even the fact that he had aided in getting Pietro out of jail. No one is quicker with the care of his pride than the Italian, high or low, and Giovanni respected his friend's wishes readily.

Summer came on and Pietro had other things to engage his mind than the care of the guest of his bootblacking father. He often left his charge with tin cup in hand on a bench in Mulberry Bend Park, bidding him remain there until he returned.

On one of these days, *il gran' signor* stretched out his tin cup to a husky man who was passing and wheedled:

"*Signor*, giv-a da penny; help-a da blind."

"*Har?*" was the response.

"Help-a da blind."

"Nuthin' doin' on the blind bunk."

The old man leaned far over and whispered what might have been a curse to any Italian who might have been watching. But it was not a curse. What he whispered was:

"Tierney, you big bonehead! Wake up!"

Tierney woke up, unfolded a crum-

pled afternoon paper, sat down beside the beggar and pretended to be very busy killing time and reading.

As the old man held forth his tin cup and mumbled seeming petitions for pennies, there was in reality this dialogue in progress:

"The man who will come for me is Pietro Mentone."

"Yes."

"Shadow him."

"Yes."

"He will meet the man who killed Busso. He is going to try to make good with the Black Hand to-night and they will talk it all over."

"Where?"

"In the rear of the tavern in the basement of the Baxter Street house where he'll take me."

"Yes."

"Be ready for trouble; I'll not be far away; wait for my whistle and come in a rush."

The detective with the sobriquet of Solid Ivory rose from the bench, stretched his arms and legs, threw down his paper and strolled off.

VI

The time had come when Pietro Mentone, long vacillating between the right and the wrong course, was to decide. He had dipped into the doings of a group of Black Handers. He had been tempted by the thought of money without hard work and, again, like Launcelot Gobbo, he was inclined to run the other way toward honesty and uprightness.

It was just before the slaying of Busso that he had shown this latter inclination. Petrosino had been killed and the way seemed open for big hostage money in kidnaping cases and large extortions by means of bomb explosions and threats of death. Pietro had weakened in the gills, had come under suspicion and for that reason the men who finished Busso had taken the corpse to the entrance of his tenement home and had pinned it against the wall.

But the unlooked-for had happened.



"You know, young man, that you have been close to death."

Pietro and all the rest of Little Italy were told in the papers that Busso had been killed in a street brawl, his body being found on the stoop with a dagger through the heart. Only those who had participated in the murder of the stool pigeon knew otherwise. The lesson had failed.

Pietro had drifted back to the lure of money without work and it was necessary to let him know of the lesson that had miscarried. In New York, as in Sicily, the little groups of blackmailers make sure of their members. They kill off the weak.

Pietro faced this crisis. He knew a great deal about many extortions and had shared in some of them. He knew of one kidnaping and the payment of a large sum of money by the parents of the child.

The wayward son of Giovanni took his blind, gray charge back to the Baxter Street tenement, ate his supper and went below to the tavern of Angelo Viconti for his glass or two of Marsala, his cigarette and his chat with his evil companions.

Angelo's tavern was sunken a good five feet under the pavement of the street, deep within the strong stone basement walls of an old house that a hundred years before had been a residence. In the rear of this stretch of bar and barrels and demijohns was a chamber filling a pit. The walls were the

foundation stones of a wing of the old base of the building. The floor of this cut-off was deeper by two feet than the floor of the tavern of Angelo. A man might set off a bomb here and it would not be heard on the street.

Here gathered people who wanted quiet and unlistening walls. Here Pietro went as midnight approached and as Vincenzo Pasquita motioned him to follow.

If he left that pit he would leave it with his lesson well learned.

As Pietro followed Pasquita and two other Italians to the rear of the tavern, a gray and blind man entered from the side door connecting with the stair leading above. He staggered as he outstretched his stick to tap the floor.

"The old man is drunk; he must have had a good day," said the bartender.

"A splendid day," replied the beggar in mellow Piedmontese Italian. "I shall buy Barbera for the gentlemen."

"The gentlemen!" exclaimed a subway trackwalker. "He must be a *gran' signor*."

"I have been, my friend," was the reply.

The bartender began taking the orders. The beggar pulled out of his pocket a five dollar bill. He staggered and reeled.

"I am drunk," he muttered. "Where is Pietro? I am blind and drunk too."

The bartender pitied the good cus-

tomer who had been a *gran' signor* and who was both blind and drunk.

"He is in the back room," he said.

"Let me have my wine and take me to him," the mendicant ordered. "I am old and cannot see. No one shall harm the afflicted of the Lord."

A Sicilian made the sign of the cross.

The bartender, superstitious and with the keen anxiety for the afflicted that inherently religious and superstitious people have, left his post and took the old man to the rear chamber.

"Pietro," he said, as he entered the pit. "Your old *signor* is drunk. He will be hurt if you let him roam about. Give him a place on the bench in the corner to stretch himself."

The old beggar fell upon the bench and began to snore as the drinking group at the table with Pietro laughed.

VII

Vincenzo Pasquita had carefully paved the way for the testing of the vacillating Pietro. The young Italian's mind was packed with tales of death and mutilation for traitors; names and dates were given.

With a start, Pietro suddenly grasped the fact that he was on trial. There was no way to get out of this hole of a room.

"You know, *amico mio*," Pasquita told him, as he thrust his bristling black jowls close to Pietro's face. "You know that you have been close to death."

"I!" exclaimed Pietro in pitiful fright.

"Yes, you, Pietro," Pasquita repeated. "You remember the death of that dog of a traitor, Busso? I killed him. He died right here at this table and it was this knife that pierced his heart."

Pasquita whipped forth a blade a good eight inches long and two-edged.

Pietro's eyes almost left their sockets.

"By the Mother!" he cried, "I am no traitor!"

Pasquita threw the knife to the uncovered table, burying the point in it. The blade, of splendid temper, trembled for a full minute in the light of the single lamp in the center of the board.

"I'll tell you, Pietro," said Pasquita, "that we thought you weak. We wanted to warn you and so we took Busso's body to the hall and pinned it so that you would see it and gain a hint in time. The body fell and rolled to the stoop and the swine they call police thought Busso was killed in a street fight. The lesson was lost and that is why you are here."

The old blind beggar, with a heavy crash, struck the floor as he rolled from the bench in his sleep. With a cry of feigned astonishment and fear, he was on his feet in another moment, swinging his arms as if groping for the wall.

Suddenly the old man lurched against the table with terrific force, upsetting it and sending the lamp, smashing and with a dying flare of light, to the floor.

The pit was as black as the bowels of Cerberus.

The little group of Italians, uttering frightful oaths, fought each other in blind effort to reach the door. But the old beggar was there already and was outside, the door shut behind him and his broad shoulders pressed hard against it. To his lips he slipped a little silver whistle. In his right hand was a revolver.

Shrill, and sending fear into the heart of every man in Angelo Viconti's tavern, the police call for help sounded above the tinkling of glasses, the shuffling of feet and the quick shriek of warning: "*Gli carabinieri!*"

Trapped in the pit, Pasquita and his companions realized that a trick had been played them. There was neither window nor chimney. The door was the only way of escape. They hurled themselves at it.

Il gran' signor stood the shock and kept his whistle going.

Once again came the crash from inside and the boards began to splinter in their grooves.

Where was Tierney? If anything had happened to him and he did not show up, the department would have an inspector to bury.

The inspector grunted and uttered a curse of annoyance. The last crash from inside was heavier than ever. Any mo-

ment he might get a knife in his back. He fingered his revolver nervously and then—

Whang!

He had taken a shot at a great glass demijohn of wine. The demijohn went over, crashing and smashing row after row of bottles with a din that should have been heard at headquarters.

The whistle was going again.

Over to the east on Park Row, a flat-footed "cop" struck into a trot and headed in the direction of the call. From Worth Street started another and still another came, running, from Park Street.

They rushed into Viconti's tavern and reached the inspector not a second too soon.

"Now men," McCafferty panted, "trip them as they come out. There is a man for each of you."

He stepped from the door and two men sprawled over the threshold. They were seized by the policemen.

From within the pit came a voice that sounded strangely familiar.

"Strike a light! quick!" called the voice.

One of the "cops" flashed his electric bull's eye. In the disk of white light the inspector saw Pasquita prone on the floor and, sitting astride of his chest, Detective James Tierney. Perspiration

streamed down his stolid face but there was the suggestion of a grin at the corners of his lips.

"I got him, chief," Tierney hailed.

"How in the devil did you get in there?" demanded the inspector.

"Gimme the bracelets," replied Tierney. "I'll tell yeh in a minute."

Pasquita, murderer of Busso, was soon in handcuffs.

Solid Ivory mopped his brow.

"You see, chief," he panted, "I come in to get a drink about sunset. There was a row started and I ducked behind the barrels. Then I ducked into this hole and hid under the bench in the corner, pulling some gunny sacks over me."

"You were there all the time?" demanded the inspector.

"Yes, sir, and when you dumped the light I tried to get to the door but you beat me to it."

"By thunder!"

"Yes, sir. I heard the whole confession of Pasquita."

"It's the chair for him surely."

"I was afraid they'd get the door down, so I groped for Pasquita, as he cursed, and we had it all over this hole."

"Are you hurt, old bonehead?" inquired Solid Ivory's admiring chief.

"Not much," was the reply. "But believe me, Chief, I've spent five minutes in hell!"



Il Gran' Signor kept his whistle going



"I'm glad you've found a good, safe investment," he said

The Disciplinarian

BY WALTER SAVAGE BALL

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR E. BECHER

YOUNG Winslow, the teller, looked helplessly along the rows of portraits of former presidents which adorned the directors' room, as if hoping for inspiration. Grim faces they were, of men who saved their money.

"But, Mrs. Lawrence," he urged, "won't you talk with Colonel Hawkins before you do this? You know how he feels about investing in these mining stocks."

Mrs. Lawrence rose decisively.

"I know Shubal Hawkins better than you do, Mr. Winslow," she declared. "I know he thinks this bank is the most important thing in Stanville, and just be-

cause he doesn't want people to take their money out of it, he's against any sort of outside investment. It's quite selfish, Mr. Winslow, and I believe I've as good a right to be selfish as he has. And now, if you please, I'd like to draw my money. It's mine, isn't it?"

"Certainly Mrs. Lawrence. I only asked you to step in here and talk it over before you decided to put it all into that Benroyal stock because I knew the Colonel would want to talk with you first. Gold-mine propositions are frightfully risky, you know."

"So you've said several times. I'll draw my money now, if you please. Or

must I go to Colonel Hawkins himself to have his bank employees do their work?"

Her tone was not flattering to the youthful teller's self-esteem, clean-eyed though he was, and Winslow turned red under it.

"I was only thinking that Colonel Hawkins is a friend of yours," he said, as he turned toward the banking room in front, almost colliding, as he passed through the doorway, with Colonel Hawkins himself.

"Oh, Mr. President," said the younger man with relief, "I've just been asking Mrs. Lawrence to talk with you before she closes her account with us. I—"

"Good-morning, Phoebe," interrupted the Colonel, stepping forward. "What's this Henry tells me?"

"I don't know," answered Mrs. Lawrence, briefly. "I only know I came in here on a matter of business and found I couldn't transact it in your bank without being asked a lot of impertinent questions by one of your clerks. Is that your usual method, Colonel?"

"Oh tush, Phoebe," retorted the Colonel lightly, though the lines of his mouth—lines not unlike those of the faces in the portraits—tightened slightly. "I've advised you about your affairs long enough for my clerks to be trusted, haven't I? Henry's all right. One of the keenest young fellows in town. If he asked you why you wanted to close your account, he did it for what he thought the best interests of one of our most esteemed patrons."

And the Colonel, tall and gray-haired, bowed in what was, between old friends, mock solemnity. Mrs. Lawrence smiled in spite of her irritation.

"Well, you know, Shubal," she said, returning to the first name as a sign of forgiveness, "I don't exactly like to have a boy asking me all about my private affairs. You know as well as I do that the interest the bank pays isn't much, compared with outside investments. And what with the prices they charge for everything these days—perfectly awful, isn't it? Do you really think this tariff thing has much to do

with it? You know I can hardly get along and give Margaret what she needs, even if she has finished college. So when I found a good outside investment I decided to take it. That's all. I suppose there's no prohibition against a person's drawing her own money out of your bank, is there?"

Her tone was now frankly quizzical, and the Colonel smiled in answer.

"I'm glad if you've found a good, safe investment, Phoebe," he said. "You know I've always been glad to suggest any that I could be *sure* of. But it's hard to be absolutely certain of anything that pays much more than the banks do these days. May I ask—"

"It's an investment in which I have every confidence," Mrs. Lawrence interrupted.

"And dividends?"

"You're almost as bad as that clerk of yours. It pays twenty-five per cent., if you must know."

"Twenty-five! What in—Great Scott, Phoebe! What makes you think—"

"I've had good advisers, I believe."

"Is it paying twenty-five per cent. now?"

"Well, it's going to after the first of—"

"Good heavens!" the Colonel almost shouted. "Phoebe Lawrence! You're next—Are you going to put your money into that Benroyal bunco?"

"I consider it a perfectly good proposition," replied Mrs. Lawrence, flushing slightly. "I know how you feel, Shubal. Everybody in town has had chances enough to know that. Of course, you're interested in the bank and naturally you don't like to see money going away from it. I told Mr. Winslow I thought I had as much right to be selfish in wanting more income as you had. Not that I blame you, Shubal. Nobody does."

Colonel Hawkins walked to the window to calm himself, a precaution he did not always take. Turning back, he faced his caller earnestly.

"Look here, Phoebe," he began, "I don't want to say anything I shouldn't, but I didn't suppose you would be fool-

ish enough to take this investment craze seriously. You, of all people! Why, you're as certain to lose every cent you put into it as this bank is to keep on paying interest. It isn't the bank I'm thinking about. It's you, you and the other fools—I beg pardon, Phoebe, but we're down to bed rock now—you and the others that are tumbling over their heads to buy up shares that aren't worth the postage stamps it takes to mail them. That's why I've been warning the people of Stanville. They're my neighbors. I know them all. And I know they can't afford to lose all they've got, and some of them are going to—all of them, if this craze keeps up."

"You've done your duty in that respect," laughed Mrs. Lawrence.

"It isn't any joke," pleaded the Colonel. "It's an almighty serious thing for this town. I'm only saying what I know. I've seen it before. Twenty-one years ago we had just such a craze. You've forgotten it. So have most people. They always do. That's why such get-rich-quick fevers can break out in the same place about once in every twenty years.

"Why, the last time it was so bad that even Roger plunged and lost. If he was alive now he'd be the first one to join me in fighting the thing. He lost, but he could afford to lose then, because he was the head of a going business and making money fast, for this town. But you can't afford to lose a cent of what he left you, Phoebe. Please, please listen to reason—for Roger's sake if not for your own."

"Don't, Shubal. That's not fair. Roger was a good business man. But so is Gilbert Rawson. So is Mr. Cushing. They're both buying Benroyal. And I've got to have more interest than you pay; you know that."

"But listen to—"

"May I draw my money out or not?"

Colonel Hawkins turned and walked to the door leading into the banking rooms.

"Henry," he called.

The teller looked up from his work. "Please balance Mrs. Lawrence's ac-

count at once and give her a draft on Boston for the full amount."

"Yes, sir," said Winslow, his own heart sinking. If Colonel Hawkins could not prevent even Mrs. Brewster Lawrence from yielding to the glittering promises of the promoters, then indeed the prosperity of Stanville and its only savings bank was threatened seriously.

"And Henry," added the Colonel, "I want to see you a minute in my office when you're at liberty."

"Sit down," commanded the Colonel as the young man entered his office shortly thereafter. "I want to talk to you about this Benroyal business. How much did Mrs. Lawrence draw out?"

"Twenty-four hundred and a few odd, on three books."

"How many others have closed their accounts for the same reason?"

Winslow thought a moment.

"I can't tell you the exact number," he said, finally. "It's more than a dozen, besides at least twenty who have drawn out a thousand or so apiece. I can give you the exact figures in a minute."

"Never mind the exact figures. How long do you think it is going to last?"

Winslow shook his head.

"Till one of the bubbles breaks, I guess," he answered. "It's growing worse instead of better. Two others have drawn heavily to-day besides Mrs. Lawrence."

"Confound it!" exclaimed the Colonel, rising in his impatience. The anger he had felt more or less steadily for weeks flamed up in him. "Don't they believe what I tell 'em? Haven't they any confidence in me any longer? If they're such idiots they can't see for themselves, doesn't it mean anything to them when I pledge my business honor that they're going wrong? How about that? What do they say about that, Henry? You hear more talking, around town, than I do."

Young Winslow hesitated.

"Go ahead!" commanded the Colonel.

"Hang it, Henry, what do they say?"

Winslow cleared his throat.

"Didn't Mrs. Lawrence repeat any of it?" the teller ventured.

"She's a woman," stormed the Colonel. "Said it was selfishness; that I was more interested in the bank than anything else. What do the men say?"

"She got that talk from Mr. Rawson," Winslow replied. "He's been saying that all along. A good many of the others think it, I guess. You know he's been made a vice-president in Benroyal. I think he got a slice of treasury stock to boom it. He's stirred up a good deal of feeling on account of your talk, Colonel. He's been telling them—"

The young man hesitated again.

"Go on," cried Colonel Hawkins, grimly.

"He's been saying that you're old-fashioned. That the bank thinks it ought to have a mortgage on all the money in town. That you don't want other people to get where you are, financially. He's even said that you're probably putting some of your own money into big paying investments, but keeping it quiet. Of course everybody thinks he means into the mines. People have been talking pretty hard, Colonel."

"Yes?"

"That's all, I think."

It was a cool morning and a wood fire was burning in the fireplace of the president's room. Colonel Hawkins turned from the window, where he had been standing, kicked a charred stick into place, waited for it to burst into flame, and turned again to the window which overlooked Stanville's busiest corner.

"The lying hypocrite!" he exclaimed.

"He has never liked you since the bank foreclosed on that sawmill of his," said Winslow.

Colonel Hawkins turned again to the fireplace, studied the flames for a moment, and then sat down.

"How's Margaret Lawrence these days?" he asked suddenly.

Winslow flushed.

"I'm afraid she'll be thinking I ought not to call very much if her mother tells her about this morning," he said slowly.

"Mrs. Lawrence was rather bitter."

"Phoebe Lawrence is a fine woman, Henry," said the Colonel. "But she

never has understood money matters. They make her peevish. Her daughter knows more than she does about them. Got it from her father. Couldn't you—sort of—you know—hang it all, Henry, we've got to do *something*. Don't you suppose you could get it through Margaret's head what a devilish thing her mother's doing?"

Young Winslow jumped to his feet.

"I beg your pardon, Colonel Hawkins," he said, distinctly, "but I'd rather not."

The Colonel glared a moment; then his face softened. He rose quickly and stretched out his hand.

"By Jove, Henry! I beg *your* pardon. This business has got on my nerves, I guess. I'm going out for a walk."

He took his hat and gloves, but turned at the door.

"Henry, I owe you a confidence for that," he said, lowering his voice. "Phoebe Lawrence took that name instead of Hawkins, once. I'd give half I've got and half the bank, too, to keep her from making a fool of herself *this* way."

Now the younger man extended *his* hand.

"I guess I understand, Colonel," he said.

The president of the Stanville Savings Bank was a Colonel by tradition and achievement. His father before him had been the town's distinguished figure and had won the same title in the Civil War. Shubal Hawkins, then a boy of ten, had later earned it by passing through all the grades of the State militia. But had this been the South instead of New England he would have borne it anyway, for he had long since stepped into his father's place, as head of the bank and financial adviser of half the town's thriftiler inhabitants.

Never before that he could remember had his advice been flouted. He could not understand why, on so plain a matter, it should be now. His fists tightened as he walked out toward the hills, reviewing what Winslow had told him. He felt about it much as he had felt when he was a second lieutenant in the

militia and his company, out one night for a lark at encampment, had defied his authority after taps. This, too, seemed like insubordination.

"Why the blazes isn't there a financial guard-house?" he mused. "The whole town ought to be clapped into it to sober off."

And the whimsicality of the notion restored somewhat his sense of perspective.

It was the Colonel's habit, whenever business worries came upon him, to walk over one of the hills that nearly girdled the village. He walked rapidly, with long strides that seldom shortened even on the grades. Some day, he knew, Dr. Manning, with whom he played whist every Saturday night, would tell him not to take the hills too swiftly. The reason he rarely consulted the doctor professionally was that, when he did, he always followed that expert's advice.

But except for a fresh determination to try persuasion with the gullible his walk this morning brought him small return in the way of inspiration. He turned back toward the bank. There young Winslow met him with another report.

"Mr. Reynolds has drawn an even thousand since you went out, Colonel."

Colonel Hawkins winced. Allen Reynolds was Stanville's leading merchant.

"Benroyal?" he asked.

"I think not. He's interested in that Mexican rubber scheme. It's been running pretty strong since their salesman located here. I judge Reynolds is going to have an office in it for the sake of his influence."

"That's bad," said the Colonel, briefly.

"He's got the influence, all right," Winslow added.

"But that rubber proposition is the flimsiest fraud of all, Henry. I've had it investigated since they brought it here to unload."

"I know," said Winslow. "But I think it'll give Benroyal a lively run for a while. Carding, its agent, is a smooth one. He had to be, to catch Reynolds."

"Well, it isn't exactly a get-rich-quick

run on the bank, is it?" asked the Colonel, frowning.

"Not yet," the teller answered.

Twice that afternoon Colcnel Hawkins personally labored with depositors, but in vain. Both were going into rubber, and wanted their money for the purpose. Both, openly or covertly, taunted him with seeking only to protect his bank from the competition of higher interest rates. The Colonel's rage grew, and he found the notion of the guard-house returning insistently.

In the evening he called on Dr. Manning.

"Doc," he said, "please tell me that I'm a fool."

"In which direction?" asked the doctor, smiling.

"Whichever seems most conspicuous at the moment."

"You're worrying."

"That's only a symptom."

"Then you know the cause yourself. What is it, gold mines?"

"Gold mines, rubber plantations, the bank, and the population of Stanville. It's the population I'm worrying about. Either they're fools, or I'm one. You meet 'em in a way I don't. Which is it?"

The doctor produced a box of cigars and passed it to his friend.

"You're smoking too much," he said. "Throw the last half of this one away."

They smoked in silence for minutes. Finally the doctor spoke.

"I know the lay of the land. I know what you've been telling them, and I know what they're saying. They're crazy, Shabal. Crazy. But what can you do? What can I do? You've done your duty by the town. There's going to be some awful repenting here when the crash comes. It was all I could do this morning to keep old Mrs. Andrews from mortgaging her house to go into Benroyal. She mentioned it while I was up there to see her son. He isn't going to last long."

"I wish to glory she'd ask *me* to take the mortgage," exclaimed the Colonel, fiercely. "I'd tell her some things."

Dr. Manning shook his head.

"It wouldn't do any good. You must



It was the Colonel's habit to walk over one of the hills that nearly girdled the village

know it for yourself, Shubal. This thing has gone so far, and Rawson and the others have worked up such a feeling against you, that the harder you oppose their proposition the bigger advertisement it is for them."

"What—" shouted Colonel Hawkins, jumping to his feet.

The doctor sat up.

"Throw that cigar away," he said sharply.

The Colonel bit the end of it viciously.

"Throw it away," repeated the physician. "That's a prescription on the spot."

Colonel Hawkins drew a slow puff of smoke, looked at his cigar longingly, and threw it into the fireplace.

"I beg your pardon, Tom," he said as he sat down. "But that's a mighty hard thing to say to me. Do you believe it's true?"

"Shubal," said the doctor, leaning for-

ward, "this thing is going to do for you if you take it too seriously. This isn't an order from your physician, but I wish you'd not smoke quite so much. That's honest, old boy. You're going to lose your grip of yourseif if you don't look out.

"I've lost patients in my day, Shubal. Quite a few of 'em. And it didn't kill me. It was hard, mighty hard sometimes. But I'd done my best and they had to go. Just so this has got to be. I'm not an alienist, but I know enough to know that this craze for get-rich-quick investments isn't all financial. It's the same thing that makes the mob. It's a fever, and more contagious than any fever I've ever had to fight. You've done your best, and now all you can do is to leave it to heaven or whatever you believe in.

"I'd help you with it if I could. I've tried to stop a few from throwing away all their little savings. I hope I stopped

Mrs. Andrews this morning. But I don't know. I don't know."

The Colonel sat silent for several moments before he answered. And then his voice was hard.

"About that thing you said. What made you say it? Do you honestly believe my opposition helps along these robberies?"

"Not with everybody. With some of them, yes. Rawson puts it up to them that you talk against it because you are afraid of the strength of Benroyal. The rubber people have taken the cue. Now for your own sake, forget it. The bank isn't bothered, is it?"

"I asked Henry Winslow to-day if it was a run. He said, 'Not yet.' We'll pull through all right. But think of the people, Tom. Think of the people."

"Think of yourself," retorted Dr. Manning. "Think of yourself. That's an order from your physician, too."

"All right, Doc," laughed the Colonel, saluting with the gesture of a private before his officer. "But I'm much obliged to you for telling me some things, just the same."

He walked fast and far on leaving the doctor's home, smoking as long as his cigars lasted and forgetting to throw away the halves.

"I'm boozing their robberies, am I? Damn 'em!"

The Colonel spoke the words aloud as he walked, and then, suddenly, he stopped—and chuckled.

"Oh, I am!" he exclaimed, and turned homeward, walking slowly.

Young Winslow met him as he entered the bank next morning.

"I saw Margaret last night," he said.

"Yes?"

"She's worried. Asked me if you couldn't do anything to stop it. Mrs. Lawrence has got the never hard, Colonel. She's even talking of borrowing money on her property to put into it."

"The devil she is!"

"That's the way she's talked to Margaret, Colonel."

"And you?"

"I told her you'd done your best. That's all I could tell her."

"Good boy, Henry. We've done our best, I'm afraid. Though I'm going to keep on preaching to 'em. Lord knows, that's all the good it'll do."

Winslow turned toward the door, but stopped and came back.

"I forgot," he said. "Margaret thanked you for what you tried to do yesterday. Her mother told her."

"Good for the girl!" exclaimed the Colonel. "Didn't thank you, no?"

"She thanked us both," said Winslow, laughing.

That day the Colonel stayed closely at the bank. One or two depositors handed in their books. Several more drew out sums that were large for them. Winslow was able, with his knowledge of their friendships, to place them either as Benroyal or rubber adherents.

"It looks bad," he told the Colonel at the close of business. "Wouldn't you—"

"I think so, Henry. I'm getting a day off, anyway. I think I'll run down to Boston to-morrow on a little business, and tell the State Street folks that we'll need ready cash in sight for the next few weeks. Thank heaven we're sound!"

"And pray heaven there don't any more 'investment' propositions strike town!" murmured Winslow.

But the wish was vain. Perhaps Stanville had acquired a reputation for being eager—and easy. Promoters have a way of circulating such knowledge, and it is an axiom of the business that competition keeps the fever alive.

Within a week a brisk young man, secretary of the Owark Land Improvement and Irrigation Company, was in town, quartered in the most expensive rooms of the better hotel, and calling on all who valued future independence to witness that in all the world no money was to be made like that which came from turning mountain streams aside into deserts which, thus aided, would blossom as the rose.

Colonel Hawkins snorted when he heard of it.

"But irrigation's the thing these days," pleaded Winslow. "I'm afraid of it, Colonel. And this Wardlow, the sec-

retary, is a wonderful talker. I heard him over at the hotel last night. It does sound like real money merely to hear him tell it."

"Oh, does it!" echoed the Colonel, the grimness of his face increasing. "I'm going to look up this Owark Irrigation."

Winslow had sensed the situation rightly. The lure of the land and the wonders of irrigation, backed by the photographs of huge dams and much literature issued by the Government, worked marvels. Whereas Benroyal had fought hard for a footing, and Mexican rubber had struggled for weeks before Stanville investing sentiment ran its way, irrigation bounded at once into favor.

Colonel Hawkins was true to his word. Agents of his Boston correspondents were called upon and made report. The Colonel learned beyond denial that Owark Irrigation was a shadow, one of the many hangers-on of legitimate development. That Owark valley was listed among the Government projects was true. But Secretary Wardlow's company was far to the north of the point reached by any possible diversion of the mountain streams. Its holdings were beyond any hope of development.

All this Colonel Hawkins proclaimed. But the people of Stanville laughed. The more the Colonel raved, the more did Secretary Wardlow insist that selfishness was his motive, the natural dislike of a home banker to see money invested where it would bring real returns. And as for returns, had not every irrigation project that was wisely carried on yielded every three years dividends amounting to its capital? There were figures with the Government's own label on them to prove it.

And so irrigation dreams enveloped Stanville. Benroyal at its best had never done so well, and Gilbert Rawson winced as he saw its sales fall off in deference to the newer favorite. Mexican rubber went miserably out.

Wardlow, the secretary, even had the courage to approach Colonel Hawkins in his own office, whose windows looked

out on the busiest corner. The Colonel's wrath was plain to the idlers who had their stand there, and they chuckled. But the news quickly went to the uttermost corners of the town, and the fact that Irrigation's secretary thought so well of it as that was further testimonial to its solidity.

Mr. Wardlow, sleek and suave, left the Colonel's presence with imprecations ringing in his ears, but he chuckled for all that. For he knew human nature. Colonel Hawkins stormed more furiously than ever, but his warnings had even less weight now. He had been made a joke in the town's gossip.

Winslow entered the president's office, one morning, a week later, trembling. No teller likes to see his president appear on the border of nervous collapse and be forced to bring more cause for fury. Colonel Hawkins gruffly asked what had now become the daily question:

"How many yesterday, Henry?"

"Eleven, Colonel. Eleven closed their accounts entirely and fourteen drew out a thousand or more apiece."

"Fools!" snarled the Colonel. "All irrigation?"

"Nearly all, I think. Benroyal and rubber haven't done so much lately. And Colonel—"

"Well?" said the President, as the teller hesitated.

"I thought you might have heard it. But Dr. Manning's gone into it heavily. I hear he is to be made vice-president of the company."

"Thundering—"

The Colonel stopped from sheer inadequacy of words. Young Winslow shifted uneasily in his chair.

"Is that true?" demanded the Colonel. "How do you know it? How do you know it?"

"It's all over town," said Winslow, defiantly. "Wardlow announced it last night. Three men have drawn their savings out this morning. I'm pretty certain, on the strength of it."

Colonel Hawkins turned swiftly to his telephone and called Dr. Manning's house. Winslow, still sitting there, heard

his president's half of the conversation. He could have heard it as well had he been at his desk, for the Colonel shouted.

"What's this I hear about your going into Owark?"

"Great heavens, Doc! Couldn't you have talked with me first? I know what—"

"Then spend it! Don't throw it away."

"Go to blazes!"

And, there being customers in the bank, the news went swiftly forth that Colonel Hawkins had broken a lifetime's friendship with Dr. Manning. And the doctor was the most popular man in town.

Till now, those who had invested had done so chiefly with their surplus savings. But as the fever grew, Stanville's native caution, which the originals of the portraits in the director's room had nourished, failed wholly.

"Mrs. Petcold, the expressman's widow, wants to see you, Colonel," reported Winslow. "She drew out her savings to invest in Irrigation last week. Nearly a thousand."

"Then what does she want?"

"Wants the investment committee to take a mortgage on her house."

The Colonel groaned.

"You talk with her, Henry. Tell her I'm busy. Tell her we'll do it if we can. Only try to stop her first."

The following day Mrs. Lawrence was shown into the President's room.

"Shabal," she began, "I've been doing some very careful figuring. I'm going into this Irrigation company of Dr. Manning's. It isn't very convenient to get some of my other investments into money right away, I suppose."

"None that I have anything to do with," snapped the Colonel. "Perhaps you could negotiate that Benroyal stock you bought."

"Oh, but I don't want to let that go. Not now, anyway. The price advances next month. Though I almost wish I'd saved it to put into Irrigation. I never saw anything surer. But I thought, Shabal, that if I could take some money out—"

"You haven't got any in, Phoebe," said the Colonel.

"Please don't interrupt. If I could have some money on my house, you know, till I could convert some of my other—"

"Phoebe Lawrence! Don't make me repeat the things I said before. You can't be such a—Phoebe, this thing's a worse fraud than the others. I've looked it up. I know."

"Dr. Manning has gone into it."

"Dr. Manning is a fool."

"It's useless to argue, Shabal. I know how you feel. I've got to have more income, and I know Dr. Manning wouldn't go into anything that wasn't good, any more than Gilbert Rawson or Mr. Cushing would. I can place the mortgage somewhere else, I suppose. Only I thought—"

"Wont you listen to reason, Phoebe?"

"I've listened to a good many reasons, Shabal. Will you give me the mortgage? The property is about the best in town, isn't it?"

"Look here, Phoebe. If you're going to be foolish anyway, I'd rather have the bank hold the mortgage than some outsider. It's a perfectly good security. I'll take it if you insist. But for the last time, for Margaret's sake, if not for your own—"

"It's for Margaret's sake I'm doing it."

"Very well. You'd probably put it into Benroyal if you didn't into Irrigation."

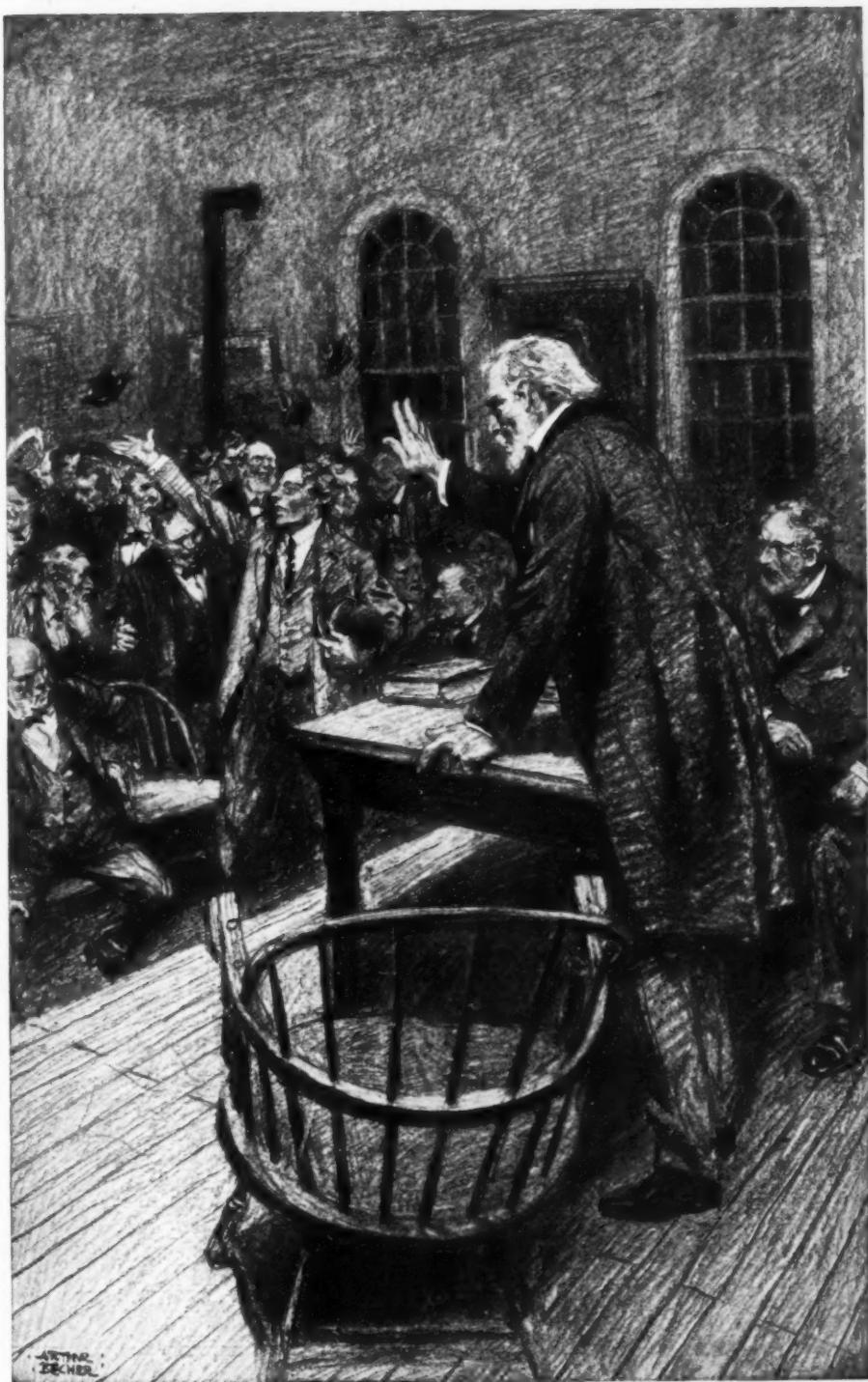
"I was thinking of it when the Irrigation proposition was presented to me," said Mrs. Lawrence, decisively.

Colonel Hawkins himself attended to the mortgage. For the next few weeks there were many such transactions to carry through, and the bank's surplus was further depleted by withdrawals.

"Can we stand it?" the Colonel asked Winslow.

"So far," was the teller's assurance. "We can't if it keeps up much longer, I'm afraid. But the fever seems to be dying out a little."

"Humph!" growled the Colonel. "All the fools are drained dry, are they?"



"Gentlemen—" The Colonel raised a warning hand—"you are at liberty to draw
that money to-morrow."

"They will be soon, I'm afraid."

Again Winslow's predictions were fulfilled. Gradually the pace slackened. Irrigation's sweep had been clean. Benroyal and Mexican rubber still sold in small takings, but Irrigation had nearly driven them from the field. And now Irrigation had taken all there was to take.

Stanville sat back to await its dividends and live in luxury, with only an occasional touch of anxiety among those whose caution awakened with the waning of the fever. Nervousness increased a little as the weeks passed, and more as the months brought small news of dividends. Benroyal felt the suspicion first, and then rubber. Irrigation's promises had been timed to a longer period of grace.

Finally, anxiety became fear, and fear panic. The whisper that Gilbert Rawson had been quietly selling his own stock at the height of the fever grew to certainty, and a traveling mind-reader, sensing the local feeling, sent shivers through an audience at the opera house by failing to see yellow in answer to a written question about Benroyal, folded and held securely in the hand of the questioner in the audience.

A meeting of stockholders was called and a protective committee organized. Rawson had, himself, taken mortgages from some of those who attended, and the feeling was not subdued thereby. An envoy sent west to investigate returned with news that fixed the panic into hard despair. Benroyal mines were half-developed holes, long since abandoned by those who had honestly begun them.

Mexican rubber went similarly, though there were fewer preliminaries to its demise. It simply dropped from sight after it had been exposed in the newspapers of the cities, as one of a long list of ventures like unto it.

Then came Irrigation's turn. There were many who held their faith in this. There were many who had to. All that had gone into the others was small in proportion to Owark Irrigation's sweep. But when the promised day of dividends

passed, Stanville was prompt to act, its despair crystallizing into stormy anger, and the meeting to organize the protective committee was called. Stanville was growing used to the forms.

There were the usual speeches from small investors invoking vengeance. Then Dr. Manning, as vice-president of Owark, spoke earnestly, urging them not to be too hasty in their judgment. Irrigation work was slow, but once completed, its returns were quick and sure.

But there were hisses, and some one called:

"How much of your stock did *you* sell?"

The vice-president of Owark Irrigation was having a stormy time when Colonel Hawkins, tall and grim and deliberate, walked into the room. Stanville was in a mood for hissing, and the Colonel had not hesitated to say "I told you so." Calmness did not follow his entrance. But he ignored the affront. Walking steadily toward the platform of the hall he addressed Dr. Manning.

"May I say something?"

Dr. Manning, his face reflecting a mixture of emotions, nodded decisively.

"Gentlemen," began the Colonel, with the fire that once upon a time had sent a militia company to the guard-house. He was forced to shout to be heard.

"Gentlemen, Owark stock will *never* pay a dividend."

The crisis hovered close, but he went on:

"It will never pay a dividend, because I am the Owark Land Development and Irrigation Company."

The room quivered in the suddenness of its silence.

"My neighbors wouldn't believe me once," the Colonel went on, speaking now low and clearly. "They even said my protests were helping along the pocket-picking promoters. So I decided to help along a fraud that *I could control*. I organized Owark. I bought up a worthless property that was just ready to be floated. I brought a salesman here. I opposed him as I opposed the others, and you know the answer."

"Dr. Manning here, helped me. You

all have heard of what I said to him over the telephone from my office. We knew you would. You owe more to Dr. Manning than you realize.

"I warned you and you laughed at me. But, thank God, you bought my stock instead of gold mines and rubber plantations that didn't exist. Owark does exist; just exactly as much of it exists as there was at the beginning, and no more.

"The money you paid for it is on the books of the Stanville Savings Bank to your credit. My clerks put it there to-day. The mortgages the bank has taken I burned before coming here to-night, burned them with the consent and help of the investment committee, of which Dr. Manning is chairman.

"Gentlemen—" The Colonel raised a warning hand as some jumped to their feet—"you are at liberty to draw that money to-morrow if you choose. The Stanville Savings Bank will probably never pay more than four per cent."

Colonel Hawkins stopped abruptly and sat down. For a moment his audience was dazed into silence.

Then Dr. Manning, smiling faintly, looked toward the Colonel and started to rise. Over and over again he had warned the banker of the chaos of this moment and the danger if sentiment went against him. Even his neighbors might prove ugly if driven into a corner to be laughed at. The doctor's voice trembled with anxiety as he started to speak.

But the stockholders of Owark Irrigation did not hear him. By common impulse they jumped from their seats. Amazement found voice in a cheer that drowned whatever he might have said, and that turned into a frenzied roar as the full measure of their relief dawned upon them.

"Three cheers for Colonel Hawkins!" some one screamed above the roar.

The crowd surged forward, cheering again. Colonel Hawkins stepped quickly behind the platform table and raised his hand to command quiet.

"Gentlemen," he said, and his eyes narrowed quizzically, "I've told most of

you that some day you would listen to me when I said 'I told you so.' " He laughed openly and gleefully. "Well, gentlemen, I want you to listen to me now: 'I told you so.' "

The man who had rushed toward the platform turned and waved his hand for followers. But there were none. Instead, the stockholders stared a moment, and then sat down and laughed. All the relief of their long suspense, the relief of mortgages canceled, the relief of panic ended, and their long distrust of Colonel Hawkins, spent itself in that laughter. Like children who grow hysterical over a joke they have tried to suppress at table, the stockholders laughed and rocked and laughed again.

Dr. Manning turned and slapped the Colonel on the back.

"Come, Shubal, before they get over it," he said, and the two conspirators hurried through the nearest door.

Late that night, as they sat in front of the doctor's fireplace, Manning turned to the Colonel.

"How much did it all cost you, Shubal?"

"None of your damned business, Tom. But it was worth it. Maybe I owed Stanville something more than advice, after all."

And silently the friends smoked their cigars through to the end.

"But, Colonel," asked young Winslow the next morning in the bank, "wasn't it a little risky? Couldn't somebody prosecute you—Rawson for instance?"

"I wish he would," answered the Colonel, cheerfully. "It would be a jury case, Henry, my boy. Hadn't you thought of that? By the way, how's Margaret?"

"I called there last night. And, Colonel, I took the liberty of telling her and her mother what I knew you were telling them at the meeting."

A clerk opened the door of the Colonel's office.

"Mrs. Lawrence would like to see you, Mr. President," he said.

The young man and the elder shook hands gravely; then the former hastened back to his desk.

The Case Against Copp

BY ELLIOTT FLOWER

Author of "Palmer's Painful Predicament," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR WILLIAM BROWN

AN atmosphere of subdued excitement and unrest pervaded the offices of the Pioneer Construction Company. That there was serious trouble of some kind no one could doubt, but of its nature the clerks had not even an inkling.

Barbour, the manager, had sent George Copp, his secretary and confidential man, to the vault for something, and Copp had been much excited when he hurried back to the private office. Immediately thereafter, Payson, the cashier, had been called in and the door closed. Half an hour later, Payson had emerged, his face reflecting trouble as plainly as any words could convey it. But he had returned to his desk without a hint of what had transpired. Copp had followed a few minutes afterward, equally worried and equally taciturn. Bradley, being summoned, reported that he had merely been asked if he found the office door locked when he arrived that morning, it being his duty to open up. He said he had.

Barbour then sought Dixon, the president, and there was a long conference behind closed doors, after which they went to the vault together and made a careful search for something that they evidently could not find. Their faces showed that, when they returned to Dixon's private office.

"Well, it's gone," said Dixon, as soon as the door was closed, "and nothing else touched."

"Not a thing," returned Barbour; "the tin box seems to have been all that was wanted."

"The less noise made the better," reflected Dixon. "It's a delicate matter, and Cossett's advice may be of value." Cossett was their legal adviser, and he

was at once summoned by 'phone. "Now, let's see what we can make of it," Dixon went on. "There was nothing in that box that would interest the ordinary burglar."

"Nothing," asserted Barbour. "It contained several contracts that we may now have trouble over, confidential reports on the proposed county hospital and other jobs, the data upon which we based our Wissota statehouse bid, and some miscellaneous private papers."

"Of value only to competitors," commented Dixon.

"But worth a lot to them," rejoined Barbour significantly. "The Acme people would pay well for some of that information."

Dixon nodded. "It looks like some one in the office," he decided reluctantly. "What do you make of it?"

"Frankly," replied Barbour, "I hate to reach the conclusion that I do, but I can see no other. I locked the vault myself last night, and the box was there then. Both office door and vault were found locked this morning, but the box was gone, so the thief must have had a key and the combination."

"That puts it directly up to the office force," said Dixon.

"So many of the clerks have keys to the office, not to mention the janitor's master-key," Barbour went on, "that it is hardly worth while considering that, but only three people—Payson, Copp and myself—know the combination."

"That puts it up to three," remarked Dixon. "Eliminating you, it leaves Payson and Copp."

"Payson, so far as I can learn, is in comfortable circumstances," pursued Barbour, "and could hardly be tempted

ARTHUR WILLIAMS BROWN



"You are quite sure it was Mr. Copp?" persisted Cossett

by any money consideration to take such a risk, even if he were disposed to be dishonest. Copp is in debt and desperately hard up. He has been trying to swing some sort of a deal that is too big for him, I think. Anyhow, he asked for a salary advance, and I had to refuse it as contrary to the policy of the company. Then, too, the thief went as far as Copp could have gone, and no farther, for Copp *does not* know the combination to the inner safe in which the cash on hand is kept over night. Payson *does* know that combination and could have taken cash as easily as papers."

"Bad for Copp," asserted Dixon.

"Unfortunately, yes," admitted Barbour regretfully. "I don't like to believe it of him, but there is certainly a good deal of circumstantial evidence, even more than I have given. He is on friendly, if not intimate, terms with Henry Palmer, one of the sharpest young men that the Acme Building Company has on its pay-roll. It's a reasonable presumption that the missing papers are already in the possession of that company."

"More than reasonable," agreed Dixon.

"Furthermore," continued Barbour. "Payson, the only other man who could have done it, says that he was at home, playing cards with his wife and some neighbors, all last evening. That's capable of proof. Copp also claims to have been at home, but he lives in bachelor quarters, and there is no corroborative evidence. There is nothing but his unsupported word for it."

Cossett appeared while Dixon was considering this, and the problem was promptly put up to him.

"Get the address of the night watchman for the building," he instructed, "and send somebody after him in a taxi. Let's see what he knows."

Barbour attended to this.

"Now, I'd like to have a talk with Copp," Cossett went on. "You're more interested in uncovering the people behind the thief than you are in merely punishing him, I imagine."

"We are," said Dixon with emphasis.

"All right!" said Cossett. "Bring him in. We may force a confession, if he's the man."

Copp was called in, and Cossett questioned, argued, pleaded and threatened, but to no purpose. Copp steadfastly maintained that he had not been near the office after closing time that night and knew nothing of the missing box and papers. Cossett reviewed the circumstantial evidence, intimating that confession might save the culprit from the penitentiary, but still without result. Copp, while admitting his financial difficulties, emphatically denied that he had sought relief by treachery and theft.

The examination was drawing to a close, when the watchman arrived, and Cossett turned his attention to him. The watchman, in answer to questions, explained that the main entrance to the building in which the offices were located, was not locked until ten o'clock. Up to that hour it was possible to enter and leave without his knowledge, for his duties would not permit him to remain continuously at the entrance. After that hour, however, he alone could let anyone in or out.

"Did you let anyone in or out last night?" asked Cossett.

"No, sir," answered the watchman promptly.

"Were there many in the building before ten?"

"Up to about eight o'clock, yes," replied the watchman, "but I only saw one after that. There may have been more, but I only saw one. He was going out the door, a little after nine, when I came to the head of the stairs on the second floor."

"Know him?" queried Cossett.

"Sure." The watchman glanced over at Copp. "That's him," he said.

"What!" cried Copp, startled.

"Sorry if I'm making trouble," apologized the watchman, "but you was wearing the same clothes you got on now and a hat like you always wear, and I'd know you anyhow, even if I didn't get to see your face very plain."

"You're quite sure it was Mr. Copp?" persisted Cossett.

"Oh, yes," answered the watchman confidently.

Copp seemed too overwhelmed to protest further, and the watchman was dismissed.

"Well, what have you got to say now?" Cossett then inquired.

"Nothing, except that he is mistaken," replied the now despondent Copp. "I was not near here last night."

"Think it over, Copp," advised Cossett; "sleep on it, and you may have a different idea in the morning. We'd much rather have the whole story than send you to jail." He turned to Dixon and Barbour after Copp, still protesting that he knew nothing of the tin box, had retired. "See that he's shadowed tonight, so he can't skip," he instructed, "and leave him alone until to-morrow. He may be ready to talk then. If not, we can put him behind the bars and see if that will loosen his tongue."

Copp, however, was not even considering confession as a possibility, for the very good reason that he had nothing to confess; but he was considering the seriousness of his predicament and devising plans for his own safety. In consequence, although he continued at work, he accomplished little for the company and not much more for himself. Indeed, at the conclusion of a day of intense application to the one subject, he could think of nothing better than to follow his first impulse and see a lawyer, so evening found him wending his way to the home of Lucas Kirkham, the clever young lawyer whose original methods in several difficult cases had made a reputation for him.

Kirkham showed plainly that he preferred to transact business in his office rather than at home, but his vexation vanished when Copp explained the impossibility of reaching him during office hours. "All right," he said. "What's the trouble?"

"I expect to be arrested to-morrow," Copp informed him, "and I have come to ask you to take my case. I can't promise you much of a fee," he added, "but—"

"Not so fast," advised Kirkham.

"We'll talk of that later. I may not care to take the case on any terms, and, on the other hand, I may be willing to take it on any terms. Let's see what it is, first."

Copp then related all that had occurred at the office.

"It does look bad," reflected Kirkham. "You had key and combination and could have done it; you were in desperate need of money; you have been a good deal with one of the Acme people; you were seen by the night watchman—"

"I was not!" protested Copp earnestly. "When you get right down to it, he merely saw a suit of clothes that looked like mine. I wasn't within a mile of the building."

"Quite right," agreed Kirkham, after a quick, searching glance at the young man, "but he'll swear he saw you, and you have no alibi. That is bad. You have only to account for your time between eight and ten to break down the watchman's evidence and knock out the whole case. Surely some one must have seen you at some time between those hours."

Copp shook his head. "My rooms are in a small apartment building," he explained, "and I come and go as I please. No one, unless I happened to have a caller, would know whether I was in or out."

"But you were in?" suggested Kirkham.

"I was," asserted Copp emphatically.

"I'll take the case," was Kirkham's decision. "It presents some rather interesting problems. Have your bondsmen ready and get word to me if you are arrested. By the way, what kind of a vault is it?"

"Just an ordinary office vault, set in the wall," replied Copp.

"And the suit you're wearing is the one the watchman recognized?"

"Yes."

"Ready-made?"

"Yes."

"Let's see the maker's tag." He pulled back the coat collar and glanced at it. "All right," he concluded. "Get bondsmen and leave the rest to me."



"I expect to be arrested to-morrow," Copp informed him

With that, Kirkham, having already the rough outline of a plan, dismissed the subject from his mind until such time as it might be necessary to act—if that time ever came. He considered it rather more than possible, in view of the purely circumstantial nature of the evidence, that it never would. But it did. Copp, after again refusing to confess, was arrested. Cossett assured Dixon and Barbour that if this did not force a confession it would, at any rate, almost certainly uncover more evidence. And it did, but not for them.

Kirkham, having assured himself that Copp was promptly released on bonds, was wondering whether it was possible that the prosecution had more evidence than they had disclosed. Their case was rather weak otherwise, and yet, so long as Copp could not account satisfactorily, and in a way capable of proof, for at least a good part of the time between eight and ten o'clock, his case was even weaker. That was the crucial point. They needed an alibi; nothing else, as matters now stood, could make their position altogether secure.

Then, as he pondered, Miss Grace Dixon appeared with the desired alibi—which was surprising, for she was the daughter of President Dixon of the Pioneer Construction Company. She was troubled and ill at ease, which was not surprising, for it was currently reported that she was engaged to a titled foreigner, and it is not considered good form for a girl to become involved in the affairs of another man in such circumstances. Nevertheless, she had hurried to Kirkham's office the moment she heard of Copp's arrest. She wanted all the facts, and, after a moment of hesitation, he gave them to her.

"Good!" she exclaimed at the conclusion of the recital. "I can prove that he couldn't have done it."

"Couldn't?" repeated Kirkham in surprise.

"He wasn't near the office that evening," she declared. "I know, because I was with him."

This was startling. There was also an element of humor in it. To upset Dixon's case through Dixon's daughter would be a joke, but—

"Why didn't you tell your father?" he asked abruptly.

Her brow clouded. "I didn't know until now," she explained, "that there was any need of it, and—and—"

"Yes?"

"Oh, I'll tell him, to save George," she asserted, although it was evident that, for some reason, she recoiled from the very thought of doing so. "I'll even go on the witness stand, if necessary."

Kirkham found the situation baffling. "Copp says he was at home," he suggested.

"He was," she returned, the color mounting to her face.

"Then you—"

"Please don't misjudge me, Mr. Kirkham," she interrupted, her eyes appealing to him even more than her words. "I had to see him on a matter of vital importance to us both, and there was no other way."

"He said he was alone," persisted Kirkham.

"Do you think he would compromise

me?" she demanded. "Don't you know that he would go to prison rather than do that?"

"But your father—"

"Is the last person I would wish to have know," she explained desperately. "You see, mamma is a tuft-hunter."

"A what?"

"She adores titles. I don't. Neither does papa, but he leaves it all to her. Do you understand now?"

Kirkham, recalling the rumored engagement nodded.

"But I'll tell him," she promised.

"No," said Kirkham, "not now."

"I must!" she insisted.

"No," said Kirkham, "you must not. Copp would never consent, and, as for me, you have made a mildly interesting problem a deeply interesting one. I had hoped, in spite of what Copp said, to account for the troublesome two hours; now we've got to let that point stand against us. Don't you see how much more interesting that makes it?"

Quite naturally, her anxiety would not permit her to take this view, but he was finally able to convince her of the advisability of keeping silent for the present. Any other course, she admitted, aside from the possible scandal, would unquestionably defeat a plan—

"Never mind that," he interrupted. "Perhaps I can guess the rest, but I need know only what affects the case."

Nevertheless, he seemed to find something amusing in the situation after she had left, and his smile was broad as he reviewed the facts.

"What a joke," he murmured, "if I could only spring it. I can almost see old Dixon's consternation. But," he added, rousing himself to action, "I can't, and the case is somewhat more complicated in consequence."

He rang for Barstow, who was studying law in the office and incidentally serving as clerk.

"Barstow," he said, "you're about five-feet-ten and weigh about a hundred and sixty pounds, I imagine."

"Five feet nine-and-a-half and weigh a hundred and fifty-eight," replied Barstow.

"Near enough," approved Kirkham. "Are there any more like you?"

"Why, yes, sir, of course," answered Barstow, bewildered.

"Do you think you could get me about a dozen young fellows of approximately your height and weight who would not be averse to earning a little money easily?"

"As many as you want," returned the still bewildered Barstow.

"Must be smooth-shaven, you know."

"Yes, sir."

"Then round me up eight or ten," instructed Kirkham. "I don't care who they are, so long as they meet the specifications. Just pick them off the street or anywhere."

"I'll get them," Barstow promised.

"And on your way out," added Kirkham, "tell Miss Jordan to call up the Hartley Lock Company and ask them to send Pete Dorsey over here."

Kirkham wrote and addressed a note while he was waiting for Dorsey, and it lay on the edge of his desk when Dorsey arrived. Dorsey, in the working clothes of a mechanic, seemed rather out of place in the office, but he did not appear to realize it.

"Pete," said Kirkham, "you can do me quite a favor."

"Uncork!" returned Pete. "What is it? There aint anything I wont do for you, Mr. Kirkham."

"Well, there's nothing very difficult in this, as yet," explained Kirkham, picking up the note. "I want you to take this over to the Pioneer Construction Company and wait for an answer. You don't look much like a messenger, but no matter. It will take a little time to prepare the answer, which I don't care a hoot about anyway. Just put in that time sizing up the vault from a burglarious point of view. I want to know what you think of it."

"Goin' to tear off a job of your own?" asked Pete.

"Possibly," smiled Kirkham, "if you'll show me how."

Dorsey laughed and left, returning about an hour later.

"Well?" queried Kirkham.

"It's a joke," reported Dorsey. "They made vaults of that kind when Adam was a boy. I could open it with my feet."

"That's what I wanted to know," said Kirkham.

"Anything more?" asked Dorsey.

"Not now," replied Kirkham. "Later, perhaps."

It irritates a lawyer to have an opponent who refuses to take the case on trial seriously, and Cossett was irritated. He had not really expected that the case would ever come to trial, but their unsuccessful efforts to extract a confession had carried them so far that they felt they must go through with it, if only for the moral effect. So Cossett now found himself associated with an assistant state's attorney who, aside from an occasional suggestion, seemed disposed to leave everything to him. And Kirkham persisted in treating it all as a joke.

Even in his examination of talesmen he had been jocular, asking absurd questions that were little more than a travesty upon customary methods, and he had been so easily satisfied that not one of the peremptory challenges allowed him had been used when the jury was completed.

To make matters worse, there were indications that the jurors themselves had absorbed some of this spirit of burlesque and were disposed to regard the whole affair as amusing rather than serious. They also seemed impressed by his air of indifference and good-natured toleration when the witnesses for the prosecution were being examined, and his cross-examinations were so brief and apparently perfunctory that they strengthened the idea that he considered the case too absurd to be worthy of serious effort. All of which, as previously stated, irritated Cossett and his clients.

Barbour was the first witness. He testified to the general facts relating to the disappearance of the tin box and also the nature of its contents. He showed that Copp was one of two who could have done it, that he was hard up, that



"Do you think he would compromise me?" she demanded

he had been most importunate in his appeal for a salary advance, that he was on apparently intimate terms with an employee of a rival concern, that he could not satisfactorily account for his time the night of the robbery, and that there was nothing in the tin box that would appeal to an ordinary thief.

Kirkham, in cross-examination, badgered him with a few apparently aimless questions, and then asked him to describe the box.

"Why, it was an ordinary tin box—a

cash-box with the change-tray removed," replied Barbour.

"Oh, a cash-box!" repeated Kirkham.

"Yes, sir."

A few more aimless questions that made the jurors smile, and then Kirkham asked the witness if Copp had ever been guilty or even suspected of any other criminal or dishonorable act.

"No, sir," answered Barbour; "I have always found him faithful and capable, and I disliked to believe him guilty of this."

"Then why did you?" queried Kirkham.

"The evidence—"

"Ah, yes, the evidence," interrupted Kirkham, and dismissed the witness.

Bradley, a clerk, testified that he was the first to arrive at the office the morning after the robbery, and he had found both office-door and vault locked. He had not tried the vault, but later he had seen Payson, the cashier, work the combination to open it, which would not have been necessary if it had been unlocked. Kirkham yawned and dismissed him without cross-examination.

Payson, the cashier, testified that he was present when Barbour closed the vault, that the box was there then, that the vault was locked when he arrived in the morning, that he had opened it, and that the loss of the box was discovered soon afterward. He also knew that Copp was in desperate need of money.

"Ah, yes," said Kirkham indifferently; "were you ever hard up, Mr. Payson?"

"Yes, sir," admitted Payson, "but not recently."

"You are fortunate," commented Kirkham; "but would you consider yourself properly an object of suspicion if you happened to be hard up when a theft was committed?"

"Why, no, sir."

"Then you don't consider poverty an evidence of crime?"

"Certainly not."

"I'm glad to hear you say that," remarked Kirkham, "for, if it were otherwise, I might be in jeopardy myself."

Three other witnesses were called to testify on minor points, only indirectly corroborative, including Copp's intimacy with an employee of a rival company. Neither employee nor company was mentioned by name, for it was admitted that neither could be directly implicated, but they were, of course, Palmer and the Acme Building Company. Furthermore, according to one witness, Copp had once remarked, referring to the tin box, that there were people who would pay big money for some of the things it contained.

Kirkham was not interested and dismissed each with a wave of his hand. So far, it was all too indefinite to be convincing, and, in spite of the troublesome two hours that could not be accounted for, he felt that he could practically laugh the case out of court. But the last three witnesses, although the testimony of one was expected, materially changed the situation.

Dan Prouty, the watchman, testified that he had opened the doors for no one after ten o'clock, when they were closed for the night, but he had seen Copp leaving about nine. He had not had a good look at his face, but he knew Copp well by sight and was sure he could not be mistaken.

"If your honor please," said Kirkham, when the witness was turned over to him, "I do not care to question Mr. Prouty now, but I may wish to recall him."

"The witness will remain within call," instructed the court.

Then came the first real surprise. Shannon, a clerk, testified that a man whom he knew only slightly had intimated that it would be worth a lot of money to him (the witness) if he could procure the originals or copies of certain papers that the box was supposed to contain. He had reported the facts to Mr. Dixon, but he understood that it had been found impossible to get evidence against either the man or the company suspected of being behind him that would warrant legal action in that matter.

"Is the man who came to you," asked Kirkham, "the same one with whom Copp is said to be on friendly terms?"

"No, sir, he is not," replied Shannon.

"Is the company suspected of being back of him the one with which Copp's friend is connected?"

"Yes, sir, it is."

To the surprise of all, and especially Cossett, Kirkham did not pursue the subject further. He felt that he was on dangerous ground. If a previous attempt had been made to secure the papers by corruption it strengthened the presump-

tion that they had been finally secured that way, but it seemed to him the part of wisdom, especially in view of his previous attitude, to treat the matter lightly, as of little consequence, rather than to emphasize it by rigid cross-examination.

Dixon was the last witness for the prosecution, and he did little more than corroborate other witnesses upon two points. The papers in the box, he said, contained business secrets and private memoranda that would give competing firms an immense advantage in bidding for business. There was nothing, so far as he knew, that would be of value to anyone else. That was one point. The other related to Shannon's story. Shannon, after being "approached," had immediately reported the circumstances to him, but, after investigation, the matter had to be dropped because of inability to secure sufficient evidence to convict. Shannon could have secured the papers only with great difficulty, if at all, but the men who were after them might not have known that at the time. Possibly, too, they had intended to use Shannon merely to reach some one in a better position to do the job. Possibly, again, they had dealt directly with this other man after failing with Shannon. All he could say was that he believed Shannon, and Shannon's story certainly showed that an effort, finally successful, had been made to get these papers.

Kirkham's cross-examination, although in the same humorous and sarcastic vein, was longer and a little more searching than it had been with the other witnesses.

"You think, then," he said, "that Copp committed this theft because somebody else was once asked to do it?"

"Not at all," answered Dixon. "That's merely a significant detail. There is other evidence—"

"That he had a key to the office, perhaps?" suggested Kirkham.

"That's a minor point," returned Dixon. "It would carry no weight at all, if it stood alone."

"No weight at all!" Kirkham emphasized this.

"None—if it stood alone," admitted

Dixon frankly. "So many, including the janitor, have office keys that almost anybody might be able to get one."

"Well, what *did* make you suspect Copp?" demanded Kirkham.

Dixon reflected. "The vault was not forced—" he began.

"Must have been Copp because no charge of dynamite was exploded," commented Kirkham.

"It must have been somebody who had the combination," corrected Dixon.

"Quite sure of that?" queried Kirkham.

"It's obvious," asserted Dixon.

"And Copp was guilty of having the combination?"

"He was the only one who had the combination and also a strong motive," parried Dixon. "He was in desperate need of money."

"Is there anything suspicious in the need of money?" asked Kirkham.

"It supplies the motive," answered Dixon, "and he was on friendly terms with an employee of a company that would profit much by such a theft."

"A man who fails to carry business antagonism into private life must be a treacherous scoundrel," remarked Kirkham.

Dixon showed his irritation, but he did not let it betray him into a hasty answer. "I considered this merely a corroborative detail," he explained, "but of importance as such, just as is the fact that he is unable to account satisfactorily for the time during which the theft must have been committed."

"That is, he foolishly neglected to take a witness to bed with him," commented Kirkham.

Dixon, ignoring this, went on. "He knew what the box contained," he said, "and he was one of the few who did."

"You think that a point against him?" queried Kirkham.

"Certainly—a corroborative detail."

Kirkham seemed to find this surprising. "That box resembled a cash-box, didn't it?" he asked.

"Why, yes."

"Might have been mistaken for one?"

"Yes."



"We have come to tell you something about that old box, papa," she explained

"Then doesn't it occur to you that it might look more attractive to a man who didn't know its contents than to one who did?" demanded Kirkham.

"Why—why—I hadn't thought of that," faltered Dixon. "But it's of minor consequence," he added, "for he was seen in the building during the time he says he was at home."

"That's the convincing thing, is it?"

"Yes—that and the fact that the theft must have been committed by some one who had the combination."

"Has the combination been changed?"

"Of course. It was changed the day the theft was discovered."

Kirkham dismissed Dixon abruptly and asked to have the watchman recalled. He questioned the latter closely regarding his identification of Copp, laying increasing emphasis on the part that clothing had played in that identification.

"His clothing identified him?" he suggested at last.

"Partly," admitted Prouty.

"Largely?" queried Kirkham.

"Well, yes, I guess so," answered Prouty.

"In other words," said Kirkham, "you recognized a ready-made suit of clothes of which there are hundreds of duplicates?"

"I never see any others," returned Prouty. "I—"

He stopped short, his eyes on the door. A young man of about Copp's height and build and attired precisely like Copp was entering.

"You see—" he began again, and again stopped. Another young man, of similar build and in similar attire, was entering, and behind him came another and still another, all much alike in figure and absolutely alike in raiment. Eight of them solemnly filed in and seated

themselves in a row. Prouty's eyes bulged out and he seemed bereft of the power of speech. His consternation, combined with the absurdity of the situation, made even the jurors laugh, while the judge himself was unable to repress a smile.

"You recognized him by his clothes principally?" remarked Kirkham blandly.

Prouty turned a troubled face to his inquisitor. "I dunno," he mumbled uncertainly; "I dunno. It looked like him, but I dunno, now. I thought it was him; I can't say no more than that. Mebbe it was anybody."

Pete Dorsey was called next, and he frankly admitted that at one time he had been known in the underworld as "Pete the Pick," because of his facility in picking locks. He had reformed, however, owing largely to the influence and efforts of Kirkham, and was now employed by a lock company. The company knew his record, but Kirkham had overcome this objection by personally vouching for him.

"You're posted on locks, then?" queried Kirkham.

"All kinds."

"Did you ever see the vault in the Pioneer company's office?"

"Twice."

"Well, Mr. Dorsey," said Kirkham, "do you think you could get into that vault without forcing it?"

"I did, didn't I?" exclaimed Dorsey.

Cossett straightened up with a jerk; the assistant state's attorney gave him a scornful glance, and Dixon and Barbour looked at each other in consternation.

"Well, let's have the story," said Kirkham.

Dorsey turned to the jury. "I sized up the vault first, like Mr. Kirkham asked me to do," he explained, "and told him it was as easy as holdin' up a blind cripple. Then he wanted me to go with him last night an' try it, which I did, there bein' reasons why I'd do anything for him. That's all there was to it. Openin' that vault was so easy I'm ashamed to say I done it."

"Burglary!" exclaimed Dixon.

"Why, yes," agreed Kirkham easily, "although we took nothing. If you care to prosecute, however, you'll find some evidence under an old ledger just inside the door. I left my card there."

Dixon tried to say something about "burglary" again, but Cossett kicked his shins and Barbour jabbed him in the ribs. The case had collapsed, and they had no mind to incur the criticism that would inevitably follow an attempt to pursue the matter further.

The assistant state's attorney, seeing point after point lost—the identification, the need of the combination, the significance of knowing what the box contained, etc.—was already asking to have the case dismissed.

"And no alibi," gloated Kirkham. "It was not such a bad job, to get him off without one."

Dixon was staring in a bewildered way at a tin box on his desk when his daughter appeared, accompanied by Copp.

"We have come to tell you something about that old box, papa," she explained. "I know George—Mr. Copp—did not take it."

"So do I," returned Dixon.

"How do you know?" she asked.

"There's the box," he replied, pointing to it, "with nothing missing. The police found it in a raid on a thieves' den. But how do you know?"

"We were together that evening, planning an elopement."

Dixon looked up, startled.

"Mamma had just told me that that horrid French count was coming," she explained, "and—and—" Dixon nodded understandingly. He knew his wife's ambition. "But he was delayed—fortunately," the girl went on, "for George wouldn't marry me while that dreadful charge was hanging over him; but now—"

"Well?" queried Dixon.

"Let the Frenchman come," she laughed; then with a bow and a radiant smile: "My husband, papa. And if you're real good," she added, "we'll let you break the news to mamma."

Goliath

BY ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

Author of "The Snuffle Sneeze," "The Whiggin Plipp," etc.

THE chill weather and Grandma Gastrop arrived at the Fannings' built-by-the-contractor house about the same time, early in October. The chill weather was accompanied by falling leaves and an odor of camphor-balls, and Grandma Gastrop brought a large trunk and the asthma. Grandma Gastrop was a dear old lady, not quite as large as the Fat Woman in a side show, and when the lamb chops caught fire in the kitchen and whiffs of smoke came through the large crack between the kitchen door and its casing, Grandma Gastrop would gasp, grasp her throat with her hands, wheeze like a juicy tobacco pipe, and fall back in her chair, as purple in the face as the shadows of an impressionist painting.

Of course Mr. Fanning immediately gave up smoking in the house. One whiff of smoke in the air was enough to purple grandma, and the smoke of half a cigar would have her flat on her back, gurgling, clawing the air and trying to bite chunks out of it. It was an awful affliction, but Grandma Gastrop said she had never died of it yet, and wouldn't unless the tip of her nose turned white. When the tip of her nose turned white, she said, everybody must run for all the doctors in town. A white tip denoted danger. But although Grandma Gastrop had many purple spells the tip of her nose never seemed less purple than the rest of her face. As soon as Mrs. Fanning opened all the windows and doors and fanned Grandma Gastrop with a large palm-leaf fan Grandma began to recover. At such times Mrs. Fanning watched the tip of Grandma's nose with eagle eye, as a runner watches the starting flag, ready to sprint at the first paling.

By the fifteenth of October the weather was so chill Mrs. Fanning went about the house in a shawl, with her teeth chattering, and the baby played on the floor with a blanket pinned around it. The only comfortably warm person in the house was the Snuffle-sneeze, the Fannings' permanently hayfevered hired girl, and she snuffled and sneezed over the warm kitchen range as if she were the coldest of them all. She was a most depressing maid-of-all-work for cool, fall weather. She seemed to say, "You are all—*sniff, sniff!*—goin' to catch deaths of colds—*kerchoo! ak-kerchooo!*"

Mr. Fanning had long since laid in his winter coal. He had it in the bins in the cellar on the third of August, because that was the day the man came to take the record of the water meter, and couldn't find it, because the contractor had put the meter in the corner of the coal bin—a convenient place for a water meter. But of course, it was not necessary to remove the entire ten tons of coal from the bin to get at the meter. Only about five tons had to be shoveled out.

Mr. Fanning had his coal in, and he had arranged with Goliath to attend to the furnace, and both Goliath and Mr. Fanning were eager to begin using the furnace. It was the first furnace Mr. Fanning had ever owned, and he was as eager as a child with a new toy, for it was an extremely handsome and efficient looking furnace.

"I just want to start that furnace," Mr. Fanning said. "I want to try it. That furnace is about the only thing around the house that was not built by the contractor, and I want to see if it will work right. Nothing else does."

It certainly was a beautiful furnace, brand new and shining. It stood in a depression in the cellar floor, like an iron octopus in a galvanized-iron overcoat, with arms extending in all directions. Most of these arms were hot-air pipes; one was the smoke pipe; and the whole thing looked big enough to heat a hotel. Mr. Fanning loved to open the furnace door and look into its vitals and think how much comfort would come out of that furnace as it digested its daily meals of coal. He was eager to begin being comfortably warm, and Goliath was eager to begin earning his weekly stipend. He came to see Mr. Fanning every evening.

"Gettin' quite smart cold, Mister Fanning," he would say in an off-hand way.

"Yes, it is," Mr. Fanning would say. "We'll soon have to start her up, eh, Goliath?"

"Yassah! An' dat's a mighty fine furnace, Mister Fanning. Mos' my folks has started they furnaces already. Co'se it aint so *mighty* cold—"

"We'll have to start her soon, now," Mr. Fanning would say, rubbing his hands. "Can't wait much longer."

"No, sah. Co'se, Mister Fanning, I aint want to hurry you none, but I's a po'r man. Seem like ev'body want me to tend they furnaces. Yes, 'deed! Season is a wearin' on, an' I got to earn my furnace money whilst I can. You aint give up wantin' me to run you furnace, has you, Mister Fanning?"

"No, sir!" Mr. Fanning would say positively. "Now, don't you go and take so many furnace jobs you can't run mine. Understand? We'll start her up in a day or two."

For Goliath was an expert. He wasn't an ordinary furnace tender—he said so himself. He said—well, he gave the impression that furnaces were an open book to him. He implied that he could take a pinch of coal—about a salt-spoon full—and run the furnace a day on it, and keep it so hot every door and window in the house would have to be left open on the coldest days, and the surplus heat would melt the snow on the

other side of the street. There wasn't a thing he did not know about furnaces, and the particular kind of furnace Mr. Fanning had, had been his life study.

Goliath was a small negro, about the size of a peanut, with a face as black and glossy as the front of the furnace, and he wore shoes that, in size, resembled the foot hills of the Rocky Mountains. His trousers were so large they turned up a foot at the bottoms and came up so high under the arms they rubbed his chin. But he was efficient. He said so himself. He said he was, in the matter of furnaces, a perfect marvel.

There was but one reason why Mr. Fanning did not have Goliath start the furnace at the first touch of chill in the October air. Grandma Gastrop begged and pleaded against it.

"I know, dearie," she said, with tears in her eyes, "you'll have to start it sometime, but—put it off! Put it off as long as you can! I can stand the cold—kerchoo! kerchoo—but smoke kills me."

"Smoke?" said Mr. Fanning. "But we don't want smoke, grandma. We want heat. Look at my poor child!"

As if to back up his father the baby sneezed. "Kit—chee! Kit—chee!" and Mrs. Fanning sneezed her funny little "Kitch! Kitch!"

"Ar - kar - chook! Ar - kar - chook!" sneezed Mr. Fanning. "We'll all be dead with colds if we don't have heat in this house. It's nonsense to talk about smoke, grandma. That furnace will no more smoke—Wait!"

Mr. Fanning went down cellar and untacked the "Directions" card from the cellar door, and brought it up and laid it on Grandma Gastrop's lap. He pointed to the very paragraph that said that if the furnace was properly handled—and it told how to handle it—not an iota of gas or smoke could escape into the house.

"And this man Goliath I have engaged to run the furnace is an expert," he said proudly and pleadingly. "He knows his business. He is as sensitive about furnaces as a bride about the fit of her waist. He is no slap-slop furnace handler—he is an artist. He told me so

himself. He studies a furnace as a botanist studies a flower. And he has been studying my furnace for weeks. He knows every nut and bolt in it, and can call them all by name. Smoke? Do you think a brand-new, first-class furnace, in the hands of an artist like Goliath, could smoke? That's an impossibility."

"Well, I suppose if I have to be smothered I must be," said Grandma Gastrop in the uncomplaining tone of a martyr. "But when the tip of my nose turns white—"

"It wont turn white in this house," said Mr. Fanning. "Not from any smoke that furnace makes. Here!" he said suddenly. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll ask Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp to look at the furnace first. You can take her word for it."

Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp was the oracle of the suburb. She held the underlying first mortgage on all the built-by-the-contractor houses on the block, and she knew every possible fault a built-by-the-contractor house could have, and she was a pessimist of the deepest dye. If she said a furnace, installed by a contractor, was good, it would be, not good, but a marvel of perfection. Mr. Fanning sent the Snuffle-sneeze for the Whiggin-Plipp.

The Whiggin-Plipp went into the cellar. Nothing pleased her more than to go into other people's cellars and snoop.

"Humph!" she said when she came up. "I see that cheap cement floor is crackin' in a thousand places, like I said it would, and the water is seepin' through the west wall in eight places, fit to give you all malaria, if you aint got it already. If I was fool enough to buy a built-by-the-contractor house—"

"I know," said Mr. Fanning patiently. "You hold the first mortgage, and your husband was a Plipp, and he wasn't worth his salt, and your family is the Whiggins, and Darius Whiggin is a mason and can repair that wall so it will not leak, and all that. But what do you think of the furnace?"

"We Whiggins," said the Whiggin-Plipp, "settled here in 1689—"

"What do you think about the furnace?" repeated Mr. Fanning insistently.

"That gas-meter in your cellar is runnin' day and night, and to my notion—"

"What do you think about the furnace?" insisted Mr. Fanning.

"Well," said the Whiggin-Plipp reluctantly, "'s far as I can see there aint nothin' the matter with that furnace, though how Mr. Gratz ever come to put a good furnace like that into a ramshackle house like this—thoug I dare say he got them furnaces on a bad debt. If I must say it, that's a good furnace, but—"

"Will it smoke?" asked Mr. Fanning.

"No, it wont!" said the Whiggin-Plipp tartly, as if it hurt her to find anything about the built-by-contractor house that was free from frailty. "It wont! A man would have to be an awful fool to make that furnace smoke into the house. I don't say but what you could do it—"

"I have an expert furnace man to run the furnace," said Mr. Fanning.

"Humph!" said the Whiggin-Plipp. "Then I don't see no hope of smoke in this house, though I'd trust old Gratz to do a thing wrong if it could be done."

"There, grandma," said Mr. Fanning.

"Do as you like, dearie," wheezed Grandma Gastrop. "All I ask is that when the tip of my nose turns white you send for the doctor."

That night it turned still colder, and when Goliath came around Mr. Fanning gleefully told him to start the furnace fire. Mrs. Fanning and Grandma Gastrop and the baby were in the parlor, with blankets wrapped around them, and Mr. Fanning went into the cellar to see that the furnace fire was started properly. He examined the furnace himself while Goliath whittled a few shavings.

"Yassah!" said Goliath, when Mr. Fanning had told him how necessary it was to avoid smoke. "Makin' a fire in a funnace is a mighty neat job, mighty neat. They's a lot of ways, but most of 'em aint known by no one but an expert like me. I kin make a fire so's there aint no mo' smoke than nothin'. Yassah! That's the kin' of fire I's goin' to make right now."

He pushed his trousers down out of his face and put the shavings in the furnace.

"I don't use no paper, startin' a fire," he explained, "'cause paper is the mos' smokiest kin' of stuff. I use shavin's. On top de shavin's—"

"George!" said Mrs. Fanning from the top of the cellar stairs, "grandma thinks she smells smoke."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Fanning irritably. "We haven't put match to the kindling yet. It's imagination. She don't smell smoke, and she wont. Don't come bothering us again with such nonsense."

"On top de shavin's I put a leetle pine wood, fo' to start up quick an' brisk," said Goliath, "so as to make a draf' right up de chimby. An' on top de pine wood I puts a leetle hahd wood, so's to set off de coal"—and he did this—"an' top de hahd wood I sprankle de coal like it was feathers. I jus' sprankle de coal on easy like."

Mr. Fanning nodded. The cellar door opened.

"George!" said Mrs. Fanning. "Grandma insists she smells smoke!"

"See here, Mary!" said Mr. Fanning. "The fire has not been started yet! Now, I want no more of this! Grandma doesn't smell smoke, and she isn't going to."

"I assuah you, Mis' Fannin'," said Goliath, "they ain' goin' be no smoke at all. Not a mite!"

Mrs. Fanning withdrew quite crushed, as she should have been after two such mistakes, and Goliath scratched a match on his trousers and lighted the very tip of one of the shavings.

Grandma Gastrop stopped between wheezes to sniff.

"Dearie," she said, "I smell smoke."

"Now, grandma," said Mrs. Fanning, "that's all imagination. You said you smelld it twice before, and yet the fire was not started, and it probably isn't started yet. George says you will not get so much as a whiff of smoke. Just try to forget it. Quiet your imagination—"

Mrs. Fanning sniffed the air. She was sure she scented a slight odor of burning

pine wood. The next moment she was sure of it. The odor was strong and irritating. She half arose from her chair, and then, remembering George's rebuke, she seated herself again. In another moment she coughed, for the room was blue with a thin haze of smoke. With a gurgle Grandma Gastrop threw up her hands and dropped back in her chair. She began to grow purple in the face and to claw wildly at the air. Mrs. Fanning darted for the cellar door.

"George!" she cried, "there is smoke in the parlor. Grandma is turning purple and the room is blue with smoke!"

"Oh, nonsense!" said Mr. Fanning. "If the furnace was smoking anywhere it would smoke down here first. There's not a bit of smoke. Not a bit."

Mrs. Fanning rushed back to the parlor. Even the hall was full of blue smoke now, and the parlor was one mass of it. There was so much smoke Mrs. Fanning's eyes smarted and she coughed. There was so much smoke she could not see whether Grandma Gastrop's nose had a white tip or a purple tip. Everything looked purple in the parlor. Mrs. Fanning threw open all the windows, and the front door. Still more smoke poured into the parlor, thick masses of irritating blue smoke. She took one look at Grandma Gastrop's nose, which still seemed purple on the tip, and ran to the cellar door. Not a sign of smoke clouded the cellar's air, but this time Mrs. Fanning did not waste words. She hurried down the stairs, took Mr. Fanning by the arm and dragged him to the parlor. It was a solid mass of smoke.

Mr. Fanning felt his way to where he knew the register in the floor should be, and closed the register with a snap. Almost instantly Goliath, in the cellar, coughed. He coughed loudly, as if he were choking to death, but Mrs. Fanning didn't care. The tip of Goliath's nose could not turn white. It was permanently black.

With the help of Mrs. Fanning, who carried her feet, Mr. Fanning dragged Grandma Gastrop into the dining-room and set her in a sitting position with her back against the sideboard, where Mrs.

Fanning could fan her with a table-cloth. From white Grandma Gastrop's nose turned to gray, and from gray to blue, and from blue to a wholesome purple again, and, as Mrs. Fanning fanned air into her, grandma's face slowly resumed its normal hue.

Then Mr. Fanning ran to the parlor again. Through the closed register the smoke was still pouring into the parlor, the fumes of coal-gas now added to the general scent of burning wood and scorched paint. In the cellar Goliath was coughing and choking like a sea-lion. The wall and ceiling of the parlor were sooty black. Mr. Fanning ran into the yard and looked at the top of the chimney. Not a sign of smoke was coming out of the chimney. All the smoke of Goliath's scientifically built fire was coming into the parlor through the register, except what oozed out of the furnace into Goliath's face. Mr. Fanning ran down the cellar stairs.

"Put out the fire!" he shouted. "Throw water on it! Put it out! Put out that fire and get out of this cellar! You are an expert, are you? You don't know enough about building furnace fires to bother a baby's brain."

"Now, Mister Fanning, I's built mo' fires—"

"Put it out! And get out!" cried Mr. Fanning angrily.

Goliath opened the furnace door, and a cloud of smoke puffed out into his face. With tears in his eyes he dashed three pails of water into the furnace, and the fire died in a cloud of hissing steam.

"George!" cried Mrs. Fanning, from above, "George! Come up here! Something is the matter. Steam is coming out of the register in the parlor."

Little Goliath leaned back against the coal box and wiped his eyes with the waistband of his trousers.

"I cahn't unnerstan' it! I cahn't unnerstan' it!" he wailed. "I been build hunnerds an' thousan's of fires, an' I ain' ever had one act like that. You tell me

some smoke went up into the pa'lor, Mister Fanning?"

"Some smoke!" exclaimed Mr. Fanning. "Some smoke! I didn't know there was that much smoke in the world. Smoke and gas and paint-smell—"

"Why ain' you shut the register off?" asked Goliath. "Mebby a leetle mite o' smoke might go up fro the register. If you shut the register—"

"Shut it?" said Mr. Fanning. "I did shut it. And then you began to cough. And not a whiff of smoke is going out of the chimney. You are a fraud. You are a fake. You don't know the first thing about running a furnace."

Goliath seemed to crumple down into his trousers under these scathing words. Only his eyes peered over the waistband, but they were sad, hurt eyes. He had been attacked in his dearest pride spot. He let his eyes rest on Mr. Fanning reproachfully a moment and then turned them, with equal reproachfulness, on the furnace that had played him false. And suddenly his eyes gleamed and his head came up, like the head of a turtle out of its shell.

"I golly!" he said gleefully. "I golly! I ain' no fake, neither. No, sah! I ain' no fraud! No, sah! I jus' might have knowed, when I tackled this put-in-by-the-contractor furnace, some'n was goin' be wrong. I ain' wonder your poor ol' gran'ma goin' turn white on the eend of her nose! No, sah! If I had knowed what I know now I goin' turn white on the eend of my nose mahself!"

Mr. Fanning turned and looked where Goliath pointed with his grimy hand.

"Yuh! Yuh!" chuckled Goliath gleefully. "Dat contractor he done run yonder heat pipe up the chimbley, an' he run de smoke pipe right spang up into de pa'lor register!"

Mr. Fanning looked and saw it was so. "Well, I'll be—" he began, and paused for a phrase strong enough to express his feelings. "I'll be—I'll be white on the tip of my nose if he hasn't!"



"Captain, go back to your squadron—and stay there!"

The Charge

BY LIEUT. HUGH JOHNSON, U. S. A.

Author of "Panginan," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY S. H. RIESENBERG

Obsolete! It is the one changeless thing in war. It can never come before its moment—and then it can never fail.

De Goncourt: "Sur la cavalerie."

WE youngsters on the Brigade Staff were forever harking back to the memory of the Old General, standing belligerently at bay before the cold and sane advice of the experts of the War Board. It thrilled us now as it had thrilled us then—all the while knowing that the General was woefully wrong, and that Wiles and only Wiles was right as he stood there, telling off his arguments on the tips of his thin fingers, in

the precise, unanswerable voice of science.

"They paralyzed our defense of the Coast when they shattered Semmes' Army of recruits at Monterey Bay, yesterday, General. We have known that precisely this was going to happen for months. Semmes is in full flight across California toward the safety of the Sierras, and they are marching down the Peninsula on San Francisco. It's theirs, General. Their fleet lies off the Golden Gate. The harbor guns are useless. The fight that you could put up with your cavalry brigade might last an hour—and

then they'd have you. On the other hand, you can take the boats for Oakland, make all haste down the San Joaquin valley, and throw a defense across Semmes' rear that may save the remnants of his army."

The General was on his feet, nervously chewing his stubble of gray mustache, an old man and an angry one, the complete antithesis of slender, exquisite Wiles, with his silken German beard, and thin emotionless voice that proceeded patiently:

"It's exactly like the game of chess, General. They cry 'guard' to your queen and you dare not throw her away."—Wiles was making a little mistake, for the General's voice, when it came, boomed out on the key-note of all things peculiarly American, and we loved him for it beyond telling.—"You've got to keep her for the final fight," Wiles pursued. "Abandon the coast towns and—"

"But I'll be *damned* if I'll do it!" The honest old fist came down with a Brother Jonathan bang, as though forever to obliterate the evidence of the war-map of the bay counties, on the table. "To hell with your queens and your chess and your laboratory war! I'll fight. If I'm licked, I'm licked—and you may telegraph *that* to Washington."

Poor old General Ward—he had been licked long before *that* gloomy April day, for his defeat began when his hair turned gray and his no longer supple mind ranted at what he called laboratory war and all that Wiles and the Board stood for.

Yet even we youngsters, who knew our Gripenkurl and Von Moltke, almost hated Wiles, genius that he was in his clammy way. We knew that to soldiering, he had made the Line School at Leavenworth what the Rockefeller Institute is to medicine, that his works on strategy and the art of war were classic, that he had revolutionized the War College and gone abroad to tell Europe what it did not know about its own prophets. But to hear him there, unimpassioned, apathetic, speaking of the abandonment of our cherished coast towns to the enemy as though they had

been wooden chessmen—there was a false note somewhere. This Wiles, who had gone to West Point, a gawky boy from an Illinois village, who had played football and *baseball* and had made his class Fourth of July oration, a perfervid, eagle-screaming, lion-baiting, boyish masterpiece, and who *then* had been caught up into the machine and turned out thus—him and his little German beard! No, the red blood had been squeezed out of him. We almost hated him, and he knew it, and he didn't care.

I tell all this because it is an essential to an appreciation of the psychology of what followed. For Wiles did telegraph Washington. It was all on the Department cards. The answer came in five minutes; the Old General was shunted; Wiles was put in command; and the Independent Cavalry Brigade was embarked for Oakland within an hour. The next morning, we detrained on the alkaline plains of the San Joaquin valley—three thousand good American horsemen that were to become the most superbly handled cavalry brigade that ever rode in any war—and that doesn't apologize to Stuart or Murat or Hannibal. But oh, the bitterness of being "superbly handled!"

You must remember that *we* were not exponents to the nth power of that exact science of modern war that knows no feeling and only the precise mathematical balancing of cause and effect, and cold, cold logic.

We were young Americans, seeing before our eyes what experts of Wiles' ilk had prophesied and we had never believed possible—our country, invaded and humbled and helpless. In the track of Semmes' army was chaos. The roads, muddy from the winter rains, were choked by overturned wagons and abandoned guns. Dead horses lay in the ditches; wounded stragglers trudged wearily through the slush, or sat exhausted in the fence corners and shook hopeless heads at the column as it passed. Everywhere the trail was littered with rifles, belts and bloody discarded bandages; along the roadside, tents, stores, blanket-rolls, and all impediments

to wild and panicky flight, had been cast off as an escaping prisoner might throw away his thongs.

Then there were hurrying households—scared children sitting high on the tops of wagons absurdly piled with precious treasures of abandoned homes, frightened women toiling through the mire, belligerent and resentful men. We knew nothing of the power of the army beyond Pachecho Pass that was accomplishing all this. We knew nothing of the horizontal sheets of rifle and shrapnel fire that had blighted poor Semmes' lines. We only understood what we saw. We stopped laughing and joking in ranks and hurried our horses a little. We were going to meet these aliens. We *wanted* to meet them. We wanted nothing else so much in all this world. It made no difference if they were twenty to one or forty to one. We never thought of that. We were ugly, seething, dangerous and we wanted to get in close—that was all we thought of. It was every man's desire and I have never been able to understand how American flesh and blood withstood that primal impulse. Wiles seemed utterly untouched by it.

And so we grew to hate him. But he *was* wonderful. He not only knew strategy; he knew everything—how to march cavalry the longest miles, when to feed and when to water, how to post and fight and fire artillery, how to check an enemy and force him to deploy, when to stand and when to run, when to fight and when to show—there was nothing that he did not know. He was perfect.

We manned Pachecho Pass, three cavalry regiments and some guns. And right in that spot, dead in his tracks, we held ten thousand of the enemy—held them for three days and lost exactly five men. It was all Wiles. His San Joaquin campaign asks nothing from Napoleon's Austerlitz or Marengo. But his heart never seemed to thrill to a human emotion. We were on the verge of fighting and we wanted to fight. Wiles was not fighting and he had no desire to fight. He was playing a game, and with fewer thrills than a bridge-player in a Brooklyn club. He was conducting an experi-

ment with the cool deliberation of an expert chemist.

We lay on the heights of Pachecho and watched through our binoculars, the methodical little black squads of the enemy, rifling the farm-lands of the Santa Clara, burning a barn or trampling a barley-field—and our blood boiled. Over in the artillery, the gunners got the range—5,000 yards—in a white wrath and laid the guns to the finest hair of exactness on the black splotches of those squads below—but they never fired. A squadron commander went to Wiles with tears in his eyes.

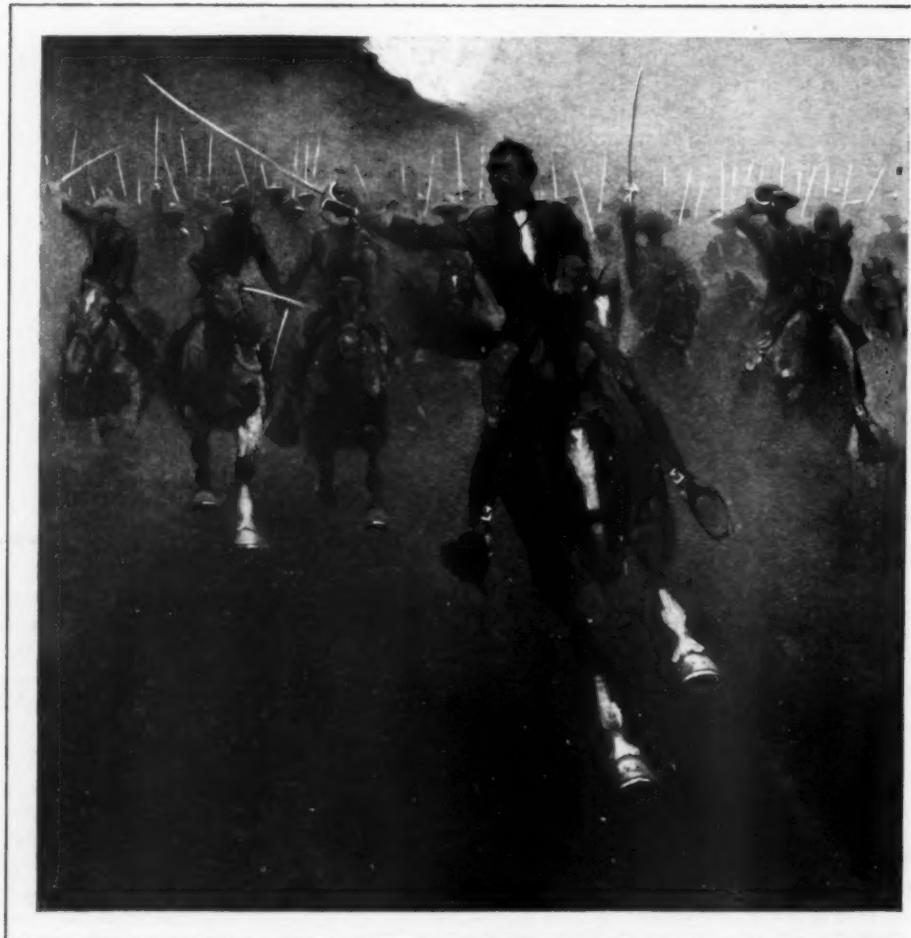
"General," (Wiles had been promoted) "those saddle colored serfs of the Orient are sacking Salinas. I can take two troops and put the everlasting fear of God into their blackened little hearts—oh, *ple-ease*, General."

But Wiles had a way of looking a man over as though he were an escaped monstrosity from a museum and fit only for amazement.

"Captain So-and-such, go *back* to your squadron—and *stay* there. This is war, sir—this isn't a Tipperary head-breaking."

Once when the Third, holding the throat of the pass against a determined advance, had stopped the enemy with close range volleys, shattered him and had him on the run, its colonel mounted it to charge the rout—but Wiles was there. It was the only passion we saw him show—anger. The men stood to horse like bull-dogs on leash, fairly wild to ride down the invaders, but Wiles walked around that colonel as a cooper around a cask—rapping him at every step. "While you serve with *me*, sir, you *know* nothing—you feel nothing. Do you understand? When I want any charging done, I'll order it. This is war—not a polo game. The next time, Colonel, I'll relieve you." Meanwhile the scurrying attackers reached safety.

He told us nothing. We were full of blood and bitterness and he moved us about as though we had been wooden men on a checker board. When we left Pachecho we had no idea of our destination. At Los Baños, the people asked



The roar of pounding hooves was like nothing else in the world and drowned—

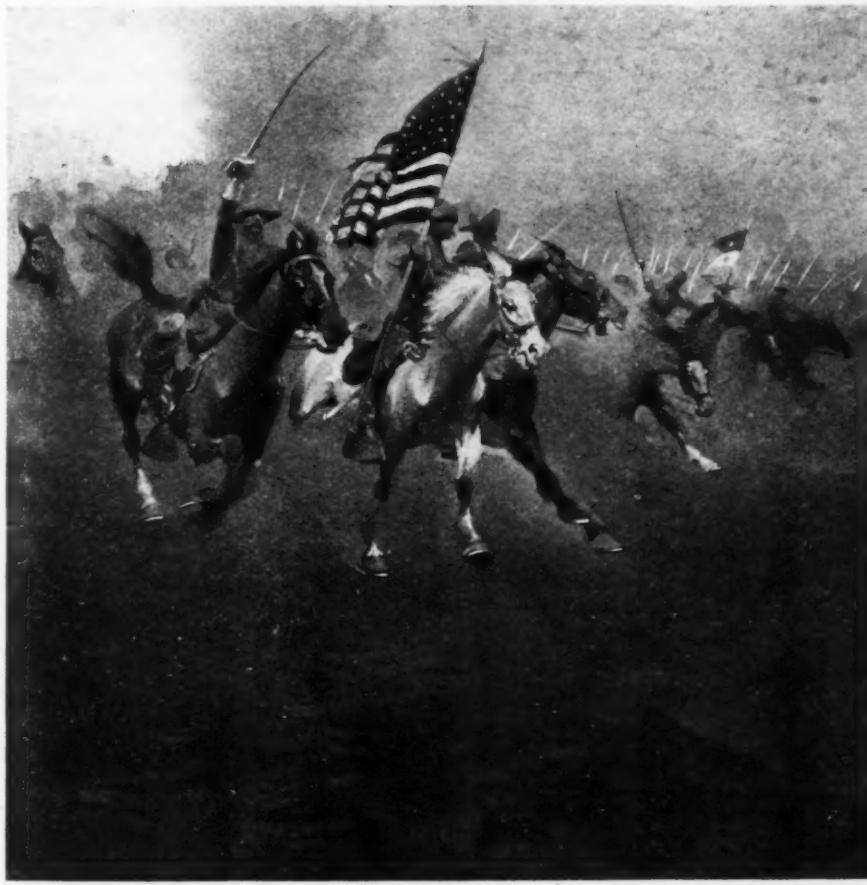
Wiles to stop for presentation of a Brigade flag. Without a word of thanks or explanation, he moved on.

"No," was all he said, but he could say it with ease and unction.

Of bodily contact, of the enthusiasm and glory that is war, there had been nothing. There had been only quick, hard marches, swift swoopings from Dan to Beersheba and back again in a night—strategy, and strategy, and strategy, and we were forever retreating, showing ourselves here, striking swiftly there and running, firing long-range shots—and watching the pillage of our native land from mountain tops.

One evening we had a chance at their supply train. From a little hillock, Wiles watched it as it crawled, double column of wagons two miles long, through open barley-fields. He was considering, and we were waiting like teasing children at his feet. Finally he turned wearily and came down slowly.

"No-o," he said. But his Adjutant General was weary too, and crabbed and cross; he said so that many could hear: "General, these men aren't Deutcherized automatons out of a Berlin *Kriegspiel*. They're two-fisted Americans and they're getting damnably tired of this war-game business. They've watched this



completely the pom-pom of our quick-firing guns that had gotten miraculously into action

pillage for days and they're crazy."

We expected to see the earth open and swallow that major. It did not. Wiles smiled his weary smile, and placed a white hand on the other's shoulder. "No, Major, you're wrong." He pointed to the trumpeter sergeant, a black-haired Neapolitan boy, next then to the Third's non-commissioned staff, three German sergeants who were known as the Square Head Brigade, and then to the Yuma scouts that we'd brought from the border a month before, with the yellow war-paint streaked across their faces. "They're just soldiers, and they'll do exactly what I say."

"Whatever foreign-born may be in the ranks, Wiles is a foreigner with the good American soul God gave him shriveled in its shell."

It was our regimental chaplain, growling in his Covenanter's voice so that I have not the faintest doubt that Wiles heard him. We hadn't liked our chaplain much before that. He was an uncouth Methodist who preached hell-fire, and we'd thought we wanted a polo-playing parson. Wiles blushed a furious red and I think that at that moment something happened in his mind.

In the length of time this strategy brought us to Sparks—Madera County,

California. It should be remembered and treasured in mind like Lexington, or Ulm, or almost Bethlehem. It isn't necessary to go to California to get the idea of the town of Sparks—the little American city of seven thousand or so. The States are dotted with them, all very much alike, in that they are blessed, clean, wholesome communities, the very expression of the hope and promise of the country, and yet all different in individual aims and aspirations. Sparks had its club, its "Department Store," its "Picture Show," its clean thoroughfares and wide streets where awakening civic pride was already showing classic civic beauty in walks and park-ways, grassy lawns and rows of pretty little cottages, and in the new high-school, where Sparks had broken away from convention in the reproduction of a Santa Barbara Mission. There were not a hundred men in the ranks who did not claim as home some such little town as Sparks.

The people thronged the streets as we marched through. They waved American flags and cheered themselves hoarse. I was riding close behind Wiles. Had he been anyone else, I would have said that he was moved. He straightened a little in his saddle and squared his shoulders. He spoke to his aide—it may have been the dust, but his voice was husky.

"It might almost be Chillicothe, Illinois." He was speaking of his own town.

Our service of information was badly crippled by the hostile occupation. The Brigade needed rest, so we camped outside of Sparks—not dreaming of an enemy in a hundred miles. I shall never forget the second night there. For the town of Sparks had planned a surprise party. The "Ladies' Aid Societies" of the churches fed three thousand men under the parked trees of the Brigade camp—chicken and cake, and all that picnic "chow," which, if it isn't the peculiar seal and product of these States of ours, is nothing.

There were girls in white muslin—fresh, pretty, wholesome, American girls in white. If there was a man there who

didn't hold enshrined some such girl, so dressed, in the back of his boyish memories, he had no place in the Brigade. So we choked over our chicken bones, and the bluish moonlight filtered down through the leaves, and flecked the lawn and those precious splotches of white, and we were pleasantly unhappy and fearfully homesick. Then the people, sitting there on the grass, sang "America," and "Columbia," and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," and the sound of it was altogether different from anything that Peace can conceive, and we began to feel the stirring of what was within us.

Poor Wiles, sat apart, hands clasping knees, head bent a little forward with his eyes on the ground. We gave him little thought then; but later, when the people had gone, and the field buzzer in the little black box at headquarters began to whine like an imprisoned rattle-snake, and the first sergeants went down the line of dog-tents, routing out the men in the gray cold of the first of dawn, we wondered if he had known all the time that the enemy were coming up the Great Automobile Highway from the south and that we had scarcely three hours to make our customary retreat.

He never told us, for he told us nothing. But the Adjutant General said:

"We're to hold the enemy some place near here for a day, and then our work in the Valley is done. The road forks just beyond Sparks. We don't know which branch they'll take. Wiles has a defensive position selected on each one and we'll probably wait near here and watch them go through."

Back of the village, the ground rose toward the foothills in a gentle swale, then sank again in a little runnel, where a wood road ran down through a scattered growth of trees to a ford in the river. It was an excellent hiding place for an entire division, and one that could be easily abandoned, though dangerously close to the highway. Yet here the Brigade formed in double column, paralleling the probable route of the enemy, and here it dismounted to wait and watch, the artillery on higher ground, a little on the flank.

We had not long to wait. The morning broke as clear as crystal, and the valley lay beneath us like a clay relief map in a kindergarten, but flecked here and there with the green of orchards and vineyards, ribboned by white, dusty roads, with little gleaming mirrors showing where the flood-waters of the San Joaquin had left their banks and filled a meadow.

A long "Ah-h" of anticipation sighed down the ranks at last, for we saw the black specks of their advance patrols, swimming up out of the strong light miles away. Then, for they did not suspect our presence, their advance guard toiled along too close, and in an incredibly short space of time we were looking down on the most wonderful sight in the world—the miniature of the march of a perfectly ordered army—twenty thousand men in the swinging stride of seasoned infantry, the patrols scampering across their front like insects on a counterpane, the advance guard spread like a fan along the fields, the antennæ of the creeping thing to follow.

A modern army does not march like a crawling caterpillar along a single narrow road. This one, not expecting attack, was very compactly formed in three parallel columns moving on a half-mile front, and soon they were so close that through our glasses, we could see every detail of the whole.

First came a regiment of infantry in each column, then, dusty strings of venomous looking field-guns drawn by shaggy Asiatic ponies, the gunners walking by the wheels, the officers, mounted, congregated in little knots at the battery heads. We could see them pointing this way and that, turning in their saddles; we could almost imagine that we could hear them talking and laughing in their strange, hoarse jargon—then came more and more infantry, the battle flags of each regiment drooping at its head, the dense, low dust of the trudging feet half obscuring the swinging little legs.

We were soldiers as they were soldiers, and for an unaccountable moment we watched them there without a trace of

hostile animus, but with only thrills of wonder at the sight and admiration for their perfect art. Then—well, we awoke to what had harassed us almost to madness.

For the advance guard was in the town of Sparks. The columns closed to the "city limits" and halted while the investigation proceeded. One regiment broke up in squads. We could see hurrying groups of men running from house to house, battering at doors with gunbutts or forcing windows, orderlies galloping back and forth, little men standing in the streets with signal flags. A battery of artillery trotted into park across the Court House green, tearing up the turf; a troop of their scant cavalry was approaching the High School. We didn't stop to cast up the value of all this, but in every man's breast, it was working like leaven in a loaf. It could be seen in every straining face. *They* may have been fanatics—those little soldiers of the enemy—of religion, and their Emperor and their dead ancestors, but we were fanatics none the less—of our people, our soil and our institutions.

Just then the German sergeant-major began muttering under his breath, "Vell, py Kolly—by Kolly—py Kolly—" And a young captain near me said, "Now if the experts hadn't proscribed the cavalry charge, it certainly looks as though we could crumple those mannikins down there." He waved his hand across the gentle slope down to where the massed columns of their main body were waiting on the ground. Wiles overheard him and looked around with the queerest expression on his face, one that I wholly misinterpreted. I thought it was wonder that anyone should be so mad as to suggest such a thing.

The troop had reached the school. We knew that the women of the town had been gathered there. We didn't apprehend any real violence toward them but—well, that troop of aliens was approaching the very heart of all that was best, most wholesome and most dear in this national life of ours.

There is no use trying to express these things—they are not to be told; but sud-

denly flooding, not exactly each man, but the Independent Cavalry Brigade as one great human, American entity, came a rush of desperate passion that surged against the dyke of repression that had held so long and carried it away.

I saw Wiles, standing with his bridle rein across his arm, digging the tip of his riding-stick deep, deep, into the turf. There was no wild emotion in his face, but his chin was trembling, and I could see that his teeth were pressing cruelly into the fullness of his lip. Then I knew all that he had endured behind his weary mask—all that he was enduring now. For the half-forgotten Boy Orator had come back and was fighting with the icy Man of Science, and surely vanquishing him.

Three things happened then—one of such seeming slight importance, that perhaps you will not give it the significance that I, who was there, cannot deny it.

In front of the High School lay a baseball diamond, the lines marked glistening white—an American diamond, perfectly peeled and as level as a floor. A battery came up at a gallop; twelve lumbering vehicles wheeled across this and utterly destroyed it. It was so ruthless, so unnecessary and so near to home—do you see?

There was a flag on a white-washed staff; they pulled this down, not with any fiendishness or display at all—they simply pulled it down. And then—

Some officers entered the building. They were doubtless obeying ordinary orders. They were doubtless all politeness until their request to vacate the building was denied. They doubtless used no more force than was quite necessary, but—but— We saw a struggling group in the doorway—two men dragging—no, forcibly *leading*, a resisting woman down the steps. A slender American boy rushed in, and I think a blow was struck. *That* was the end.

A gasping intake of breath ran down our columns—not a man taking a sudden breath but a brigade. Wiles mounted and gave a signal. The brigade mounted. There was a hush that amounted almost to complete silence—then a sound that a

gigantic monster might have made, turning in his bed of reeds, as the fours wheeled into line, facing the enemy.

The Adjutant General spoke to Wiles, suggesting that he take the ordinary caution of the oldest tactics in the world, and save a small group of men to cover a possible retreat.

"General—a reserve?" But Wiles, once given over, was the maddest of the mad. I never knew whether he or the Neapolitan trumpeter-boy spoke first, their words came almost together:

"To hell with a reserve!" And the old chaplain's voice boomed out, "The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"

And we went forward.

A cavalry charge is at no man's command. It can come only as a psychological climax, when men are so furiously moved that they are willing to abandon the advantage of fire-arms and hurl themselves forward as a living missile of such momentum that once launched, it is forever beyond recall—that to be stopped, must be destroyed.

I looked back over my shoulder as the line topped the hill—not the extended skirmishers of modern war, but the terrible, massed charge of the centuries, horsemen crowded two deep and boot to boot in a thundering line almost a mile in length.

One does not remember the sequence of these things, for the mind seems to hold only unrelated pictures: the charge sweeping over the crest like the first wave of a freshet along the level sand of a parched stream-bed—clouds of dust whipping aside in gusts and disclosing the tossing manes, the distended nostrils, and the red eyes of horses, the flash of the sun on sabers, the faces of men furiously moved—the bristling red and white silken guidons, snapping their swallow-tails above the cloud, or the heavy standards streaming their blue and yellow cords behind them. The roar of pounding hooves was like nothing else in the world and drowned completely the pom-pom-pom of our quick-firing guns that had gotten miraculously into action.

We caught disjointed glimpses of the

enemy—jumping to their feet in surprise at our first appearance, seeming fairly to wither under the blast of our artillery. Then their officers tore into the chaos, shouting commands and waving swords.

But all these things were simply incidental to the greatest thing of all, which was neither sight nor sound. It was feeling—something that came over the brigade in the moment before it struck, something so deep, so intangible, as not to be described. Perhaps if Niagara were sentient, it would feel this when the water takes the final incline to the plunge; it is faintly whispered in Tannhäuser when the roar of the basses drowns the whirring of the Venusberg. It was more than power—it was the *certainty that we were irresistible*. It was the pent-up resentment and strength of the proud young nation, tingling through the brigade, striking at last—and striking home. It was the promise of the war to come.

We struck their first line in a solid mass and the crash was audible above everything. I saw limbered guns go rolling like the cars of a child's toy train. I saw horses still bestrewn go end over end in the air, and horses gone mad, reared on their haunches screaming and

fighting with hoof and tooth and body. At the line of contact, sabers and men and rifles and hats were tossed up like spume on a wave crest. That line was literally trampled into the dust and the Brigade went over it toward the second with a yelping roar.

We were on the field for half an hour, destroying and being destroyed, and from the first shock of impact to the moment when the last stragglers came back from the pursuit of the fleeing remnant of the enemy, there was not a second when the howling, hacking American line did not go forward.

The Expeditionary Column of the Army of Pacific Invasion was not defeated; it was destroyed, and something more than generalship had done it. Wiles realized this as he stood on the field that night. He seemed utterly disconsolate.

"It *might* have been," he groaned, "the prettiest campaign in history. But through my confounded weakness, I have spoiled it—spoiled it—ruined it—and lost my one and everlasting chance for greatness."

But he hadn't—as of course, by this time, everyone in the whole world knows.

The Governess

BY ETHEL TRAIN

Author of "The Recruit," "The Grafters," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY H. S. POTTER

THERE was no doubt about it, the children were spoiled. Ponies, automobiles, a procession of governesses, each more imposed upon than the one before, lessons half-done or done not at all, according to the moods of these young favorites of fortune, had all been contributing factors in producing the existing state of things. The result was

despair in the soul of the latest governess.

She knocked one evening at Mrs. Hillhurst's door and primly made her complaint:

"You must rule them by love, Miss Gilbert," said Mrs. Hillhurst in sweet, incisive tones. The emphasis did not go with the delicate, flower-like face. It

looked so young one would never have believed that the two big children upstairs were hers. But she was always ready to be consulted in regard to them. She had acquired a taste for children as some people do for olives, and rather fancied herself in the rôle of Mother. As she spoke she held up her hand-glass critically to look at her hair, which her maid had just finished dressing. She touched a curl here and there; she bent her graceful neck. Her motions were slow and thoughtful. Then she turned her serious brown eyes from the mirror to the governess. "Yes," she said, not unmindful of the impression she was making—for she liked to make an impression, even on the most lowly—"love will do it in the end. Only have patience."

Under the spell of this radiant presence Miss Gilbert forgot all the arguments she might have used. Patience again seemed possible. The being who sat before her fastening with dainty touch the clasp of her pearl necklace, was in the habit of practicing it—patience in homeopathic doses, patience for ten minutes a day.

"Good-night," she concluded sweetly; "come to me whenever you feel like it. Not those slippers, Marie, the gray ones, with the pink embroidery."

Miss Gilbert shut the door softly and mounted the stairs. The house was very still. Her nerves had quivered all day, demanding rest; now she longed, even more ardently, for the peace she had prayed might end. She looked toward the children's room, half hoping for the giggles and shrieks that sometimes issued therefrom in the evening. But the children were tired out after a whole day of deviltry, and having consented for once to go to bed early, they had already fallen asleep. A sudden impulse made Miss Gilbert lay her hand on Gwendolin's door. Very gently she opened it and stood looking at her charge. The child slept with one white hand under her rosy cheek; her curls lay rumpled on the pillow. Sleep had changed her as death might have done; it had smoothed out all the selfish lines of stubborn will, and

cruelty—yes, cruelty! cried out the tortured heart of the woman in the doorway—and temper. An icy chill enveloped her as she realized that these two wanted no love from her, and worse than that, that she had none to give them. She had begun with a little spark of it—at seventeen—but it had all been crushed out of her long ago by the endless routine of her existence.

She shut the door and crept along the hall to her own little room. It was dark in there, and very cold. Something had gone wrong with the radiator, and Mrs. Hillhurst had been going to have it attended to. She had made a note of it a month ago on her silver-mounted pad. On that occasion she had bestowed upon Miss Gilbert one of her radiant smiles, and the governess had felt warmed through.

Miss Gilbert fumbled about and found the electric button. Mechanically she opened her bureau drawer, and got out a little shawl, which she put on. Then she sat down. The noisy little clock on the table, ticking loudly, pointed to five minutes past eight. Miss Gilbert's eyes hurt her. She had been intending to consult an oculist, but somehow the convenient time never came. Miss Gilbert looked at the little clock with a feeling nearly akin to horror. After she had watched it tick off five minutes she arose, turned it face to the wall, and sat down again.

Then she got up, undressed, and went to bed. This was worse, worse than sitting in the chair, worse than looking at the clock. In the dark her mind became terribly alert. It traveled through time, bringing back with pitiless accuracy an endless series of just such evenings, days of them, months of them, years of them! Still they came marching on in monotonous procession, like sheep all of a color, going through a gate, one by one. But unlike the proverbial sheep, her procession did not induce sleep. After all, why should one sleep at nine o'clock?

She arose, put on a wrapper, and walked to and fro. The bare walls seemed as if closing in on her. She wanted to beat them down. Changes

there had been since she was seventeen, changes of position—good children, bad children, first city, then country, but her rooms had not changed much. It was in just such a room that she, a young girl, had sat, dreaming a few shy dreams, as young girls will. She opened a book and gazed at it with unseeing eyes. Then she closed it, drew a chair to the window, pulled up the shade, and while the little clock with its face to the wall ticked off hour after hour, sat motionless, gazing out into the starlit night.

II

Miss Gilbert had had an invitation. The letter had fluttered a little as she had read it, holding it in her white hands. Miss Gilbert's hands were her one beauty—delicate, blue-veined, with tapering fingers. When she talked she used them constantly, expressing with them whatever was in her subtle and unobtrusive refinement. Some one had remembered her, an old friend of her long-dead father. The ghosts of the past came to life again, as she read, and put on flesh and blood. The letter spoke with familiar kindness of them all, and went on to say that the writer, coming on from a distant city, would spend a night in New York for the purpose of seeing her, taking her out to dine, and to the play. The date set was three weeks distant. Miss Gilbert accepted by return mail, her brief answer revealing nothing of the flood of emotion that swept her heart.

After that she was almost gay. Neither Jack's scowls over his lessons nor Gwendolin's sarcasms had power to annoy her any more. She even tried the affectionate manner prescribed by Mrs. Hillhurst, but without success. Gwendolin only lifted her fine eyebrows and laughed. She had a queenly air which impressed the servants and kept the governesses hopelessly at a distance. Every tilt of her head, every flash of her dark eyes, expressed a nature thoroughly self-sufficient. Miss Gilbert marveled at the maturity of the character of this child of eleven, marveled and shrank. Jack-

was more human, but whatever of good there was in him fell to the share of his ponies and his dogs.

"I must try," she thought, buoyed up by the letter, "I must try harder."

At last the day came. Miss Gilbert had received a telegram the night before and had turned cold for fear the yellow envelope might indicate some change of plans.

"What is it?" said Gwendolin curiously, seeing the governess grow white.

"Nothing," replied the latter, her color coming back and settling in her cheeks in two little pink spots. "Nothing at all, dear; just a word to confirm an invitation I had received for to-morrow night."

"Oh, is that all?" said Gwendolin with some scorn and entire loss of interest.

Miss Gilbert awoke on this particular morning with a new and strange sensation. Half asleep, she had fancied herself a little girl again and had thought it was Christmas morning. "It is! It is!" her heart had exulted, "and I must get out of bed to get my stocking!"

She roused herself to full consciousness, and beheld the familiar four walls of her room. Then a curious thing happened. Lying in that narrow bed with its blankets thinned by much washing, Miss Gilbert laughed, a low, sweet laugh of pure pleasure. She dressed hastily, and running against one of Jack's dogs in the hall knelt down and threw her arms about him, burying her face in his rough hair. Half ashamed, she arose quickly, giving him a little push that was half a pat, and looked about her. No one was in sight. She entered the breakfast room a moment later and found Jack already consuming oatmeal.

"Gwen's sick," he said, not looking up. "My, but she's a regular tiger!"

Miss Gilbert's heart sank. Gwendolin ill! Gwendolin, the very picture of ruddy health! And on this day—this day! She turned and went from the room slowly. The dog stood in the doorway wagging his tail; he made off sorrowfully when his new friend failed to no-

tice him. Meanwhile, the children's father was in his wife's room, saying good-by. Over the rim of the coffee-cup the calm brown eyes of his wife looked up at him. Her bedspread was of lace; a filmy mass of lace and linen clung about arms and throat.

"Take care, John," she said in her even tones, as she smiled in response to his eager kiss, "you'll upset the coffee."

That her husband admired her with the fervor of a lover she well knew, and her little weakness for admiration caused her graciously to accept his offering, daily renewed, at her shrine.

"John ought to take more exercise," she reflected now with languid interest, as his broad back and rather bald head receded from sight. "He's growing fat."

Marie at this point entered the room with the news of Gwendolin's indisposition. Thus it came that when Miss Gilbert hurried to the bedside of her charge the little girl's mother was there already, in a wrappery tea-gown, whose soft folds clung tenderly about her. Her hair, hastily braided and wound around her head, escaped here and there in little ripples. Miss Gilbert thought she had never seen her look so lovely. Her lonely heart warmed and thrilled, as always, at sight of this vision. Mrs. Hillhurst was looking with a child's helpless anxiety at Gwendolin's flushed cheeks and glazed eyes.

"Telephone for Dr. Lane," she commanded, in a voice that trembled.

The doctor, hastily summoned from tardy coffee and rolls, lost no time in putting in an appearance at the house of so lucrative a patient. Mrs. Hillhurst, with one hand smoothing the escaping locks, stood with the other on her child's forehead. "What a picture!" thought the doctor, who was susceptible. But Gwendolin turned away fretfully from her mother's caress, the only one she ever tolerated, and the doctor donned his professional manner.

"It is of no consequence," he announced judicially, after a few moments. "A mere attack of indigestion. What has she been eating? She will be all right to-morrow. You may go out

and enjoy yourself, and dismiss her from your mind."

The children's mother thanked him very gratefully, and said that she would try.

"Keep her happy, Miss Gilbert," she admonished, turning to the governess, "and let me know if she needs me." Then with a light kiss on Gwendolin's forehead, she was gone, the doctor following.

The hours wore on. Gwendolin wanted a book from the library. Then she thought another book would be better. Then she wanted a different pillow, one of the little ones from her mother's room. That wasn't the one; it was the one with the pink lining. Then she wanted her hair brushed. No, she wouldn't have Nettchen; Nettchen was so stupid. Nettchen walked heavily. She thought she would have it braided. What had the doctor said she could have? Broth. But this was *lamb* broth. She hated it. Couldn't Miss Gilbert order her some *chicken* broth? But she didn't want rice in it. And it wasn't hot enough. Wouldn't Miss Gilbert heat it over the electric stove upstairs? Thus the whole day passed, until evening. *What?* Miss Gilbert was going *out*? Gwendolin burst into tears.

"Please, please, my dear," begged the governess in consternation, "you'll make yourself really ill. Shall I call your mother?"

"You know very well that Mumsie's playing bridge."

"I'd entirely forgotten it."

"And there's a dinner to-night. Twenty-four. The roses came while you were at lunch. Nettchen brought them in for me to look at."

"Perhaps Nettchen—"

"I *want* have Nettchen. I don't care whether I make myself ill or not. And I don't believe *you* care either. If you go out I shall stay alone."

Miss Gilbert gazed at the angry face on the pillow. It looked very hot.

"Keep her happy." The words beat a tune to the beating of her heart. She felt once more the compelling influence of the woman who had all the arts that



She sank into a chair and with shaking hand took down the receiver

she had not. She heard the sweet tones of her voice. Platitude after platitude uttered in that voice came back to her. But to her they were not platitudes. Love was what Gwendolin needed—love, love. Yes, surely, that was it.

The blood surged into Miss Gilbert's face. Her tone was full of constraint as she said slowly:

"Very well, dear, I'll stay with you."

Gwendolin made no reply, and the governess hesitatingly left the room.

"I'm going to the telephone," she said; "I'll be back in a minute."

"Don't be long," returned Gwendolin ungraciously.

The governess, leaving the door of the room carefully ajar, made her way along the hall. Her knees would not carry her very well. What was this feeling in her head? She had been running

about all day, upstairs, downstairs; of course that accounted for it.

Her father's friend, whom she rang up at his hotel, was more than kind. With his old, long remembered heartiness he made light of this inconvenience she was causing him.

"I'll get some fellow," he said, reassuringly. "Don't you worry. Sorry I can't stay over another day. Good-by."

"Good-by," said Miss Gilbert. She wanted to scream instead. She wanted to keep on talking—anything. She had a despairing consciousness that she had not made enough of her excuse, had not put the case strongly. Perhaps he thought she did not care. One so often got wrong impressions over the telephone. Perhaps—Miss Gilbert put both hands over her ears. She tiptoed back to the child's door and heard her breathing

regularly and deeply: Gwendolin was asleep.

Miss Gilbert drew a chair to the door, and sat in the hall, her hands clasped. How long she sat there she did not know. Gwendolin slept peacefully on undisturbed by the sounds that began presently to echo through the house. Guests were arriving. Miss Gilbert heard the voices of the men and women, mingled. She could distinguish that of the hostess, always low and sweet, amid the modulated tones of the men she affected. Miss Gilbert began to long for the stultifying quiet of other nights. Their voices, this laughter—while she sat here, chained to her chair. Bitterly she regretted now her impulsive sacrifice. "I didn't know what I was doing!" she groaned. Her shoulder brushed the door, so close was she; the knob was of glass, and the brass trim about it needed burnishing; under it were five finger marks, left by Jack in a scuffle with his sister yesterday. How carelessly the housemaid did her work! She only wanted to get it over, and go out. "My work is never over," thought the governess. "Never, never." Suddenly she was conscious of a dreadful congestion about her temples. The blood rushed to her eyes; they no longer saw wearying details, for they were suffused with hate. She trembled all over, aghast at the sudden fury against Gwendolin that possessed her.

"I could have killed her," she whispered.

Impelled by a force that seemed outside herself, she left her seat noiselessly and tiptoed to Mrs. Hillhurst's room. The guests had just gone in to dinner, and Marie had not come up, but was busy in the dressing-room below with the wraps.

"How pretty!" Miss Gilbert thought. Even the disorder of the room was dainty—light wrapper flung across the cane bed, with its wood carving in ivory tints; one rose-lined bed-room slipper with imprint of a small heel half buried in the white fur of the rug before the dying fire. The one concession to utility in the room was the telephone; the fire

flared, and the instrument shone like silver. Miss Gilbert's unformulated purpose in coming was now clear to her and sent her heart into her throat. Feeling guilty as a housebreaker, she sank into a chair and with shaking hand took down the receiver.

If the hotel clerk had assured her that Mr. Anstruther was out she would have been capable of protesting, arguing with him, nay, supplicating him to reconsider, before pronouncing sentence upon her.

"Hold the wire," was what he said.

"There isn't a chance in a thousand," she tried to tell herself. "It must be half-past eight. Of course he's gone long ago!"

"Hello!" she heard, and could make no answer for an endless half-second.

Broken and lame her explanation sounded in her own ears, when at last she got it out.

"Good!" the man's voice interrupted her joyfully. "I couldn't get anyone, so I was eating my dinner alone. Poor fun, too! I've got the tickets in my pocket and was just getting around to starting for the show. What luck that you caught me! I'll call a taxi, and be at the door for you in fifteen minutes."

"I've got to dress!" came the faint rejoinder, but he did not hear, for he had left the wire.

She jumped up and literally ran out of the room, knocking a silken dressing-sacque from a chair in her flight, and leaving it where it had fallen, with a soft swish, upon the floor.

Miss Gilbert fumbled with her door knob, which creaked ominously. "I'm going anyway," she muttered.

In her room she pulled her trunk out of the closet. It was a very small trunk, neat, black and shiny. She had had to provide herself with one of that size because her last employer had objected to paying so much overweight on the household's annual summer migration to Maine. With trembling fingers she put on her best *crêpe de chine* of delicate hue. She had made it last year because she loved soft colors, and had never once worn it. Her hat she was not so sure of;

she had selected it without aid and in a hurry. Gloves—long ones, given her by Mrs. Hillhurst and still smelling faintly of gardenia—completed her toilet. With a sinking heart she drew on her dark cloth jacket.

"I wish I'd bought an evening wrap," she reflected despairingly. "I'll have to have this old thing checked at the door."

Having summoned Nettchen by means of the house telephone, she flew downstairs two steps at a time, never pausing until she had reached the lowest landing. No one was in the hall. What if Mr. Anstruther had already arrived and, his ring having remained unanswered, had gone away again? She tore open the front door and peered into the darkness. No one was there. Cold air filled the great hall; the night was windy, and the palms at the foot of the staircase fluttered.

"They'll feel the draught," she reminded herself, and stepping into the vestibule, drew the heavy door shut behind her.

When a taxicab, slowing down, crawled up to the curb three minutes later, and stopped, a man, getting out, saw a slight figure, not very tall, silhouetted against the panel. The figure was in shadow and motionless; behind it grotesque shapes of dragons and other curious beasts wrought in lace, stood out, illumined by blazing lights within the house. Mr. Anstruther disposed of the three stone steps in short order, and holding out both hands, cried:

"Well, well, to think that this is little Florry!"

Warm blood leapt through Miss Gilbert's veins at his words. Florry! The diminutive falling so naturally from his lips sounded like sweetest music in her ears. Yet her hands lay limp in his; for the life of her she could not have returned his pressure.

As they descended the steps, his arm supported her elbow. He was evidently afraid that she would slip. He did not realize how thoroughly accustomed she was to managing alone. She did not want him to realize it. She walked hesitatingly, and was in no haste to get into the cab.

When they had started he leaned forward looking for a robe to put over her, and not finding it, solicitously shut the window.

"Thank you," she murmured.

Under ordinary circumstances she would have preferred the window open. But far better than fresh air she loved the care with which he had enveloped her.

"I'm sorry," he apologized, "that I kept you waiting, after all. You see I wasn't dressed when you called me up. I was going as I was."

So he had dressed—just for her.

The chauffeur was making good time down the avenue, while Miss Gilbert watched the two long lines of lights, diminishing into distant pin-points.

"Isn't it pretty?" she ventured.

"It's not a patch to Broadway!" returned her companion. "Give me 'Reckett's Whiskey,' and the 'Vacuum Bottle,' and 'Bonnie Lassie' petticoats. By George, 'Bonnie Lassie' petticoats are great! To see the breeze blowing, and the rain falling—it's wonderful! And all those lights on the new Gimlet building, too! Of course you don't know how good it looks to *me*, because it's an old story to *you*."

"I've never seen it at night," breathed the governess.

Her friend veered about and stared in her face.

"What?" he exclaimed, so loud that she jumped.

Miss Gilbert said nothing; there was nothing for her to say.

"Well," Mr. Anstruther recurred, controlling his voice with difficulty, "you're going to see it right now, all there is of it. We'll do Broadway to Herald Square and back."

He let down the front window with a bang and gave his orders to the chauffeur. Watching, he saw her troubled eyes clear, and almost snap.

"We're going to make a night of it!" he said.

"I came off without a key," she tried to demur, but her face was breaking into smiles.

She sat with her hands in her lap

while the driver piloted them with skill born of much practice in and out among vehicles, trolley cars, pedestrians and policemen, her body tense and still, only her eyes alight, the lamps of a quickly beating heart.

Mr. Anstruther felt as though he were showing wonders to a little child. She must be thirty, this woman—yes, thirty at least. And he was saying:

"Look, Florry, look!—you missed that!"

"See! There's a billiard ball moving!"

"There's a corker—that bird flying!"

His voice sounded to himself didactic, explanatory, over-emphatic; to her it was the voice of a god. Her ear was tuned to it; she thrilled to its every vibration.

"I'm alive! I'm alive!" was the ecstatic undercurrent of all her thoughts. It was this man who had raised her from the dead, this man, who sat beside her and turned to her from time to time a face beautiful with compassion. Pride had upheld her for thirteen years in her battle with existence. Yet now she did not shrink from the pity of his gaze. It felt good—oh, so good!—to be protected like this.

As they stopped, finally, before the theatre, Miss Gilbert's fascinated gaze hung on a huge garland of green lights that enwreathed the name in blazing letters of the play he had chosen. At intervals the garland was blotted out, to reappear the next instant in all its former vividness.

"Not much left of the show," said Mr. Anstruther.

"It's all show to me," she replied with a sigh of supreme content, "the whole evening."

"Coats checked! Coats checked!" called out the boy at the door.

But the governess passed him by. She had forgotten the jacket. In the spaces between standing men she could catch distant glimpses of the lighted stage; spangles smote her in the eyes, dancing figures glided by. Her pulses leapt in pure joy of anticipation.

Miss Gilbert's attitude toward the play was almost prayerful; whatever of

pedantry and even of discrimination the long serious years had brought her, she shook off utterly to-night.

"Oh, it was beautiful!" she breathed as the final curtain fell.

"Glad you liked it," Mr. Anstruther answered, no longer wondering as he looked at the radiant face beside him that he had thought of his old friend's daughter as of a little girl. Time had passed lightly over her, bringing neither happiness nor sorrow, making in fact no mark at all. "Now we'll go to a restaurant," he announced, carefully tucking in her sleeves.

On the way out he interposed his person between her and the remotest possibility of pushing; he was before her, behind her and on each side.

"Don't stand in the door," he ordered. "Wait inside. I'll call you when I find him."

A woman in ermine and violets who was piloting a party of young people, brushed Miss Gilbert's shoulder in passing. Her footman, who had been scanning each face anxiously, touched his hat with hasty deference, the object of which inspired the governess with a feeling of commiseration only.

"You poor thing!" was her thought. "You've got to take care of other people, I've got some one to take care of me!"

Mr. Anstruther's head and shoulders reappeared at last; bracing himself against the out-going, closely packed throng he came toward her, beckoning.

"All right!" he said, catching her as she drifted nearer and putting his arm through hers.

Miss Gilbert was soon leaning back once more in the cab contemplating the chauffeur's back with a lazy sense of comradeship. A little feeling of comradeship with him began to form a part of her sensation of pleasure. When she shut her eyes an instant to rest them, instead of nothingness, myriad pin-points of strange and gorgeous colors pricked the fluttering lids. She moved her hand, and it came in contact with Mr. Anstruther's overcoat. She let it lie, for she liked to feel the rough serge through her glove.



Many of the tables were already full; people were being turned away

"Hungry?" he asked.

He saw her smile.

"What's the joke?" he queried.

"It seems so odd," she explained, "to be asked whether I'm hungry in the middle of the night. I'm generally in bed before this."

"What nonsense!" he returned. "It's a bad thing to sleep so much."

They were in line now for the restaurant he had chosen; in five minutes more they had stopped at the door. She had seen the pageant; now she was going to become intimate with the after-theatre life of which the glittering lights outside had been but an indication. Many of the tables were already full; people were being turned away with polite firmness. Few of these entered into argument with the head waiter; they accepted their fate and swallowed their disappointment. No doubt they went to restaurants every evening. She pictured them as reveling in a perpetual midnight glare. It would be quite impossible to her to emulate their stoicism.

"Suppose there's no room for us!" she thought apprehensively.

"Ours is reserved," said Mr. Anstruther, as quietly as though he were not putting all her fears to rest.

"What'll you have?" he asked, when they had sat down, looking at her over the huge menu card. "Caviar?"

How nice his eyes were. Neither gray nor blue, but something just between. They were full of good fellowship, of frank enjoyment. Curious effect; just eyes; all the other features hidden by—She had forgotten the caviar.

"It would be delicious," she hastened to agree.

It was delicious. So was everything else that he ordered. Holding delicately her glass of creaming champagne, she lifted and touched it to her lips, drinking to him. That silent toast of which he was unaware, filled her with a secret delight. She felt like a child who plays, with itself, some magical, unshared game.

In drinking Mr. Anstruther's health, Miss Gilbert was innocently displaying the beautiful moulding of her wrist, the

whiteness of her tapering fingers. The palm turned toward him had the color of a rosy shell.

"What lovely hands you have!" he cried impulsively, leaning forward.

Miss Gilbert looked her surprise.

"Are they?" she asked simply.

"Do you know," he continued, "you haven't told me a thing about yourself yet. Why, I haven't seen you for thirteen years! Begin."

He had not changed his position; his shoulders sloped, and the broad expanse of white shirt bulged outward. His attitude was easy and intimate. It invited confidence. Here one could talk, while waiters hurried hither and thither with smoking dishes or confections piled up on ice; the groups of men and women were all eating, drinking, and laughing; all did not look happy, but at least all made a pretense of it.

Their table hugged the wall; they could say what they pleased; their isolation was perfect.

"What shall I tell you?" she asked. "I've lived in several houses; the *best* houses. That's about all!"

Much that she had not put into her words he guessed from her face. Bit by bit he drew it out of her; detail after detail of the meager story of those thirteen years.

"But the children!" he said at length, quickly. "There were always the children!" His voice lingered over the word, reluctant to let it go.

For the first time that evening Miss Gilbert remembered Gwendolin.

"There *are* no children," she said, very low, "in the *best* houses."

He gazed at her blankly.

"No mothers, either?" he asked after a pause.

She shook her head.

"No," she replied gravely; "no mothers."

The picture was too dreary. He could not look at it.

"Don't you ever go out evenings?" he asked.

"Twice this winter," she said. "I went to chamber music concerts with another governess I met in the park."

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned.

His tragic tone made her laugh, but there were tears in her eyes. Two bright drops welled over.

Mr. Anstruther pretended not to see them, and asked for his check. When he had received the bit of paper he turned up the corner with his thumb, that she might not glimpse the total to which their little feast had footed up, and pushed his chair back noisily at the moment that hers was slipped from under her by an attentive waiter. It gave her pleasure to feel many eyes upon her as she went out, since she could hear his creaking footsteps close behind. Even in the taxi, her thoughts did not project themselves forward; they clung fast to the still present sensation of holiday.

"Are you coming in?" she asked, when the cab stopped. The face she lifted to his was radiant.

"I'll see you safe inside," he replied, closing the door of the taxi behind him.

The snap startled her. It was so decided; so final. That door would open to her no more.

He pushed the bell, and the Hillhurst butler stood before them, his professional mask replaced by an insolent stare. "I'd 'ave locked up in another five minutes," he said rudely, his hand on the knob.

The governess took no notice, but Mr. Anstruther, who had been on the point of saying good-night, changed his mind and went with her into the house.

III

"Well! That's over," thought Mr. Hillhurst, going back into the library for a cigar. He had already smoked and drunk quite enough during the day and evening, but having overcome his drowsiness after dinner sufficiently to play bridge very badly for three hours, he was now unmistakably and provokingly awake.

His wife, complacent and fresh as possible, since she indulged in no habits calculated to produce headache and stuffiness, was looking her loveliest. Many of the women who had just en-

joyed her hospitality had cast envious eyes on the fine and delicate tints of her skin, the glimmer of her hair. Just as Mrs. Hillhurst was about to go up to her room, it flashed upon her that she had left a diamond bracelet carelessly on one of the card tables. She had taken it off, she remembered, because it had hurt her. There was a faint, red circle now on her wrist. Hurrying into the drawing-room, she drew a breath of relief. There it lay, glittering on the green baize. Coming back quickly—Mrs. Hillhurst habitually moved quickly, though she was amazingly indolent—she heard sounds in the hall. Some one was at the front door.

"As late as this!" she wondered, not seeing, because the open door cut off her view.

The butler shut it, and disclosed to her astonished gaze Miss Gilbert, with a tall, strange man at her side.

Now Mrs. Hillhurst during the whole course of her entertainment, had not once thought of Gwendolin. But at sight of the governess her mind flew with astonishing rapidity to her child's bedside. The order of her existence was upset; the proper thing had not been done. For some cause, unexplained and unexplainable, a subordinate had failed to perform an obvious duty. Mrs. Hillhurst was ruffled; no, irritated; no, angry. She was outraged! What did Miss Gilbert mean by this flagrant desertion of her post? Even supposing it had been proper for her to go out, it was sheer impertinence to return at midnight! The hours of relaxation of persons in Miss Gilbert's circumstances had sharply drawn boundaries for Mrs. Hillhurst; they began at eight and ended promptly at half-past ten. So she fixed her eyes upon the face of the governess that looked toward her eagerly, and said, with self-control:

"Miss Gilbert, I'm very much surprised."

In the crumpling of Miss Gilbert's figure at her words she saw only the attempt at conciliation of a caught offender; to the escort of the governess, whom Mrs. Hillhurst had hardly no-

ticed, it seemed to have quite another meaning, for, after one startled look, he said, bending over her with a gesture infinitely gentle and protecting:

"Florry! Won't you please go up and pack a bag? I can't leave you here! I'm going to take you away to-night!"

Mrs. Hillhurst was utterly confounded. It was out of the question further to ignore this man, who made incredible propositions without raising his voice, and as if there was nothing unusual in abstracting people's governesses out of their custody at impossible hours. She was responsible for this woman! Furthermore, there was insult in his implication. What did he mean by his slight emphasis on the word "*here!*" She turned quite pale.

"May I ask," she said, in her very iciest manner, "whether it has occurred to you that you owe me an explanation of your extraordinary conduct?"

It was the tone she used, on rare occasions, for purposes of complete annihilation. She waited, confident, while Miss Gilbert slipped noiselessly away. The man failed to carry out his part of the drama; he folded his arms and stood looking at her unmoved. He was looking down, for he was taller than she. About the corners of his mouth played a curious little smile.

"I'm quite willing to make one, Mrs. Hillhurst," he began. "Florry Gilbert is my old friend's daughter. She hasn't got a past for you! She's just a puppet in your show, without any background. But I knew her when she was a girl. Maybe you don't believe it, but she was just like other girls—then! She wanted to have a good time; she could make a noise! She had relations that were proud of her; she had school chums that cared whether she lived or died! No use going into the hard luck that brought her to *this*—" He indicated the vast hall with a distasteful wave of the hand. "I don't suppose the story would interest you. But I'll never forgive myself for not looking her up before. I was fool enough to think she was happy!"

The bitterness of his tone exasperated Mrs. Hillhurst. She was almost crying.

The flimsy structure of her ideas was tottering; he was capable of knocking it down with one finger, as a child knocks down a tower of blocks. Desperately she tried to save it.

"Miss Gilbert has everything she needs," she said. "I don't know what you mean! She never told me she wasn't happy!"

She could not endure his look; there was much contempt in it, and a little pity.

"No," he admitted, "she wouldn't be likely to, if you've often treated her the way you did just now."

"My daughter was ill!" cried Mrs. Hillhurst weakly. She hated herself for defending her own conduct.

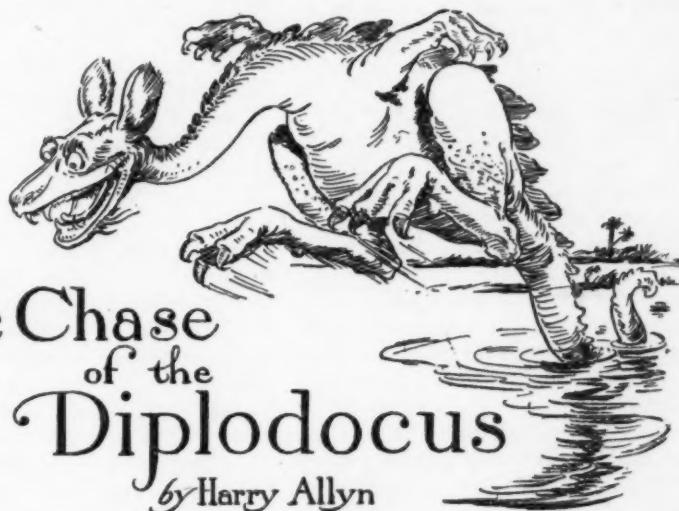
"Maybe she was asleep," he rejoined. "You never thought of asking! It was too bad to spoil Florry's evening for nothing, Mrs. Hillhurst. You see I'd laid myself out to give her a good time. She needed it, after all those nights she's sat upstairs without a soul to speak to. She didn't have the kitchen to go to, like the butler and the cook. She was all alone. Mind you, *all alone!*"

Various expressions were struggling in Mrs. Hillhurst's face, once so placid.

"Have you ever seen a prisoner," Mr. Anstruther pursued relentlessly, "after years of solitary confinement? Look at Florry! She's one! By George, it's horrible!"

His last words were a penetrating cry, cut off abruptly. Florry was coming down, carrying her bag. Mrs. Hillhurst looked up and saw her. Silent and unheeded she stood by, while Florry went up to the man, put her hand in his, and let him lead her out. The door banged behind them; its reverberations echoed and re-echoed through the house.

All that Mrs. Hillhurst had heard took on terrible, concrete meaning at that sound. Herself, she saw no longer as a petted, pampered woman, but as the last of a long line of loathsome, female jailers—inhuman, distorted, hideous. She shuddered; her eyes wide with terror, met those of the waiting butler. Instantly she stiffened, true to her traditions, and turning, went upstairs.



The Chase of the Diplodocus

by Harry Allyn

ILLUSTRATED BY HORACE TAYLOR

IT'S funny how a fellow will dodge his boss whenever he's out for irrigational purposes, and it's likewise strange how a boss will flag his employees in the same pursuit of happiness.

Therefore, when I come edging round the screen at the side door of the Goldconda Café, just across the street from the Bridgeport winter quarters, and spied the Old Man dallying with a long glass filled with an amber colored fluid, some ice and a spoon, I made as if I'd just fell in by accident or was taking a short cut to the post-office. But when he caught sight of me and give me the rigid forefinger to pause in my haste, I meandered over, showing great surprise at finding him in such a resort and in such company.

"Set down," he says, motioning to a chair on the opposite side of the table. I set.

"Tommy," he says, slowly chasing the little lump of ice round in his glass with the spoon, "d'ye ever hear of a Diplodocus?"

"Not any," I returns, looking rather askance at his beverage.

"Or a Dinosaur, or a Ceratosaurus, or a Arsinoitherium?" he continues.

"Not being a regular habitué of this joint," I replies, sorter shoving back from the table in some alarm, "I aint got quite so far from the paths of rectitude as to be on familiar terms with any of them twelve syllable matters you've just mentioned."

"Aw, you aint been educated up to what I'm driving at," he says a trifle peevish, taking his spoon out and tipping half the contents of the glass down his hatchway. "All them animals I've just enumerated used to frequent the earth a million or more years ago."

"Uhuh," I responds, wondering what in blazes he was driving at.

"Ya-as," he continues, "at least a million years ago. But now comes along a gent, one of them scientific sharps, who claims there's still some of them left—and Hagenbeck, the animal man, follows him up with almost a certainty of it."

"Wa-all," I says, kinder slow, pondering in the meantime as to where all this talk-fest was leading to, for the Old

Man don't generally get so liberal and confiding in his conversation unless there's a string to it, "I don't know but what they've got as much right to multiply and punish the earth as you and I ; what of it?"

"I'll tell you," he says. "Yesterday I run across a fellow over in McGurr's place,"—I give a shudder at the idea of *my* boss frequenting a dump as tough as McGurr's—"a fellow who told me he'd seen an animal resembling the first I mentioned, the *Diplodocus*, down in the big Florida Everglades. Said it would scale forty or fifty feet long, had a neck like a giraffe, a tail like a kangaroo, legs five times bigger than our hippopotamus and ears like the sails on a two-masted schooner."

"Didn't remark anything about its singing like a canary and climbing trees like a monkey, did he?" I inquires some sarcastic.

"Now don't get so skeptical," retorts the Boss, making the dry sign to the man in the white apron. "You aint acquainted with quite *all* the *fauna* of the earth's surface, notwithstanding the fact you were born in an animal cage and been following the show business all your life. This gent had *seen* it, mind you; seen it with his own eyes grazing on the vegetation and gamboling over the bogs in glee."

"He must have been a graduate of McGurr's likewise," I remarks very dry-like. "I can imagine them's the sentiments McGurr's stuff'd be liable to bring out, particularly if he'd been loitering there for any length of time."

"But coming right on top of this Wise Guy's and Hagenbeck's assertions," insists the Old Man real earnest-like, "not to mention a couple of photographs taken from a mile or two off, I actually *had* to believe him."

"He had the pictures, did he?" I inquires, getting some interested in spite of my forebodings of coming trouble.

"He had," responds the Boss. "And I'm going to send you and Fisher down to see if there's such a thing as capturing it for the menagerie end."

"Good Lord!" I gasps. "What, send

a couple of measly mites of men down into the innards of Florida to snare, crate up and lug back here to Bridgeport a mountain of prehistoric live-stock that runs to forty or fifty feet long and weighs more than a Baldwin locomotive. Man, you're going dippy! Leave the rest of that stuff in the glass and come out into the air where you'll see things in a different light!"

"Nope," he says, as stern-like as a police judge giving a man six days or three dollars. "Nope, you've got to go down and investigate. The education of the Great American Public comes before anything else on earth—and the Biggest Show on Earth is the greatest educator. Just think," he continues, leaning over kinder beseeching, "just think of the glory that'll accrue to the discoverers of an animal that's descended straight down from before the time Adam wore knee pants! Why, you'll be bigger men than Hank Hudson or—or old Jule Caesar ever dared to be."

"Uhuh," I says, mentally seeing myself listed away up alongside the top-liners—and mebbe getting ten or fifteen dollars a word for my experiences in capturing and taming an animal whose family tree dated back to the seed epoch. "But think of the risk to life, limb and bank account?"

"I've figured that all out," returns the Boss, "and I've decided to give you two fellows the only chance you'll probably ever have to jump into prominence in the public eye, if it bankrupts the whole blooming show. Why, Tommy," he continues, waxing real earnest about it, "if you two succeed in beguiling a sample *Docus* from its native wilds, the stock of this menagerie outfit will jump so high it'll make U. S. Steel certificates look like wildcat mining-stock. Think of it, man," he says, so convincing I could almost see the finish of my objections. "Think of it!"

I thought; and the harder I worked my thought mill, the more difficult it looked—but the more necessary the possession of a *Diplodocus* seemed to be to my future peace and comfort.

"Wa-all," I says, after scanning the

matter over *pro* and *con* and *vice versa*, "I dunno that I've any strong antipathy to trying to bag one of these antique insects, but I'm not so extremely optimistic as to the outcome."

"I'm chancing all that," he says with considerable satisfaction. "Now let's get up to McGurr's and have a talk with the gent who located the *Docus*."

We found the discoverer standing with his stomach pressed hard against McGurr's bar-rail, and when he found we wanted to talk business from a liquid standpoint, he loosened up amazingly.

"I suppose you are going along as a sort of a guide?" I interrogated.

"I am *not!*" he replies without any hesitation. "No more wandering from the bosom of an effete civilization to chase the elusive prehistoric mammal over its virgin stamping grounds and through its native ooze for me! Never again! This being within hailing distance of a grogorum suits me a plenty—and then some!"

He was willing to talk though—few men aint—and within half an hour the Boss and I'd dragged out all the information he was able to deliver and plotted out a sort of a map to go by. Then, back to the elephant barn we drilled to give Joe a chance to back out or stay in the game.

I let the Old Man put the matter up to him—he's one of the most persuasive talkers I ever heard—he started out barking for a side show—and almost before he'd finished I could see that Joe was kinder leaning our way. And by the time it come to me to put in my little peep, the expedition was under way—all except the starting.

"You're set on going?" queries Joe, turning to me as the Boss made his closing remarks.

"Sure!" I responds. "Think of how our names will go sounding down the ages alongside of Bryan and the gent who discovered gold in California!"

"Some of them's dead ones," Joe remarks, thinking deeply.

"Not dead, but sleeping," I quotes. "And besides, young feller," I continues, "Fame never dies. Look at Pontius Pi-

late—and Shang Draper, the bank burglar—and 'Uncle Tom's Cabin!' Nope, Fame never dies."

"Just as you say," replies Joe, and I knew we were on the *Diplodocus*'s trail for fair from that minute.

It took us a week to gather our junk together for the excursion, and on the following Monday morning, when the Old Man give us the warm-hearted mitt at the Bridgeport station, I felt that we were indeed crawling up into the ranks of the Good and Great at a rate that'd have thrown Jack Johnson into a dark-brown study.

We got into Palm Beach without meeting up with anything to jar the joy of our journey—the Boss had been more than liberal as to expense account—and for a few days we lolled round in the shadows of the newly-rich, soaking in the odors of gasoline and cologne until I didn't know which I smelt most like—a taxicab or a bar of toilet-soap.

It was a great life. Joe and I could 'a' stood a lot of it, but a telegram come from the Old Man and put the kibosh an our *début* as cotillon leaders, and the following morning we set out for Miami to hit the big swamp on the southern end according to directions. And two days later found us well started on the trail of Dippy.

For two weeks Joe and I paddled, waded and wallowed up through the unhealthiest section of the United States, keeping close to the points of the compass and our map, and early in the evening of the fifteenth day we sneaked down a little channel overhung with trailing vines and other trimmings of the tropics, to find ourselves butting up against the only chunk of real solid ground we'd seen since leaving port.

I don't know when I've felt such a sort of a warm-hearted feeling toward common, ordinary dirt as when we stepped ashore, and almost before our bacon and coffee had sunk to our equators we were yawning like hippopotamuses and looking for our blankets.

The gray dawn was creeping through the rank vegetation when I woke up, and for an instant I thought I'd been look-



ing too long on the hops when they froth, and had strayed into somebody's conservatory to sleep it off. Never have I seen stuff grow with such lush extravagance. Weeds that ought to have been an inch high stuck out of the swampy earth ten feet in the air; ferns as wide as a table cloth and as long as a fishing rod sprouted up all around, and Spanish moss festooned everything with a hoary, old drapery that made me feel some like a grass widow just emerging from her weeds. Joe was still dreaming of the little dress-maker back in Bridgeport, I presume, but three jabs in the ribs soon brought him to a perpendicular position, and fifteen minutes later we were gathered round a fire watching the coffee boil merrily over the side of the pot.

After breakfast we consulted the map. We concluded we were still on the right trail for we'd been more than particular to follow directions to a hair although McGurr's scholar hadn't mentioned our

present camping ground in his description. And after packing a couple of back loads of supplies, we left the launch and started off into as trackless a wilderness as I've ever seen—and I've followed some mighty obscure trails.

I don't want to get on your nerves with a detailed account of that day's travel, but I will say that we cut a swath so wide it could have been followed by a balloon a mile high. First it'd be a quaking bog which we'd cross in fear and trembling; then, when we'd just got used to that shivery feeling, a patch of dry earth overgrown with vegetation would obtrude itself and we'd have to pause and get our sea legs before we'd dare to traverse that. Next it'd be a few thousand acres of hummock varying in density from fruit cake to beef stew—and then it'd break suddenly off into a slough of seemingly impassable mud. These we swum or waded through, lugging our

supplies on our heads to keep them dry, and by the time the sun showed an inclination to set, we'd come to the conclusion that nothing short of a whole litter of Docusses would pay us for the trials and tribulations of the last twelve hours.

The gray was settling down in the west by the time we arrived at a hunk of apparently solid ground, at least one that wouldn't dissolve into its constituent elements before morning, and we climbed out of the swamp onto it, thankful the Lord had let us get so far without summoning us for trespassing. I gathered a few twigs together to start a fire while Joe struck off into the underbrush to collect the fuel to feed it. I'd just got to the match-lighting point when back he come tearing through the jungle like a bull elephant running amuck. I straightened up, intending to pass out a few words of censure at his haste in a country where we weren't ac-

quainted, but the first glance at his face in the gray light made me pause.

It was something near the shade of an ancient pan of beef-tallow and his hair stood on end in a way that reminded me of Shakespeare's allusion to the quills upon the fretful porcupine.

"Great Gawd, I've saw it!" he gasps as soon as his heart sogged down to make room for his vocal apparatus.

"Saw what?" I inquires in a calm and even tone—one calculated to cool almost anything from a riot in an insane asylum to a kicking cow. "What d'ye think you've saw?"

"Seen the Docus!" he whispers, trying to keep his knees from stuttering together. "Run right bunk into him where he was laying himself down to sleep!"

"Aw, g'wan," I interrupted scoffingly. "Big game like that don't allow no such blundering trailer as you to come up onto it without putting up something of a ruction. You've been sopping up so much swamp mixture that you've got water on the brain; that's what's the matter with you."

"Nope," he reiterates, his disposition riling up and thereby getting more intelligible, "I tell ye I *saw* the dummed

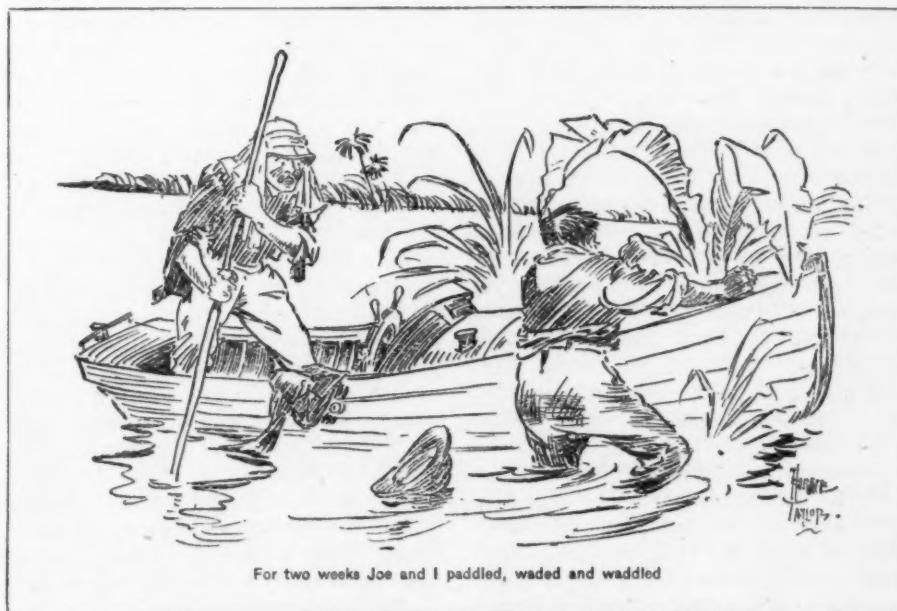
thing as plain as I'm standing here—and I'm almost certain I could hear it snore and swish its wings."

"They aint got no wings," I says authoritatively, for I'd seen pictures in a natural history the Boss had borrowed. "Docuses are land insects, mostly."

"I don't care a cuss!" he says so positively I had an idea that mebbe he *had* run across something out of the ordinary. "I reckon I know what I seen, and if it wasn't so dusky and we were familiar with the country, I'd take you out and show it to ye; that is," he concluded, "if it aint got restless and wandered off to some other place."

"Come on," I says, anxious to get a glimpse of anything that'd make me think we'd got to somewhere near the end of our ravaging through the big swamp. "Lead me to it."

Either Joe got tangled up in his geographical points or I was undue eager, I don't know which, but he led me considerable of a struggle through an awful growth of vegetation before he came to a halt. And then, pausing on the bank of what looked to be an impenetrable slough a half or three-quarters of a mile across, he pointed over to the north-east.



The dark was settling down amazingly, but there was still light enough to let me see something that actually made my hair crinkle along the back of my neck.

Off across the waste of mud, water and tropical growth I saw a long, dark-gray mass that to my eye looked like a battle ship turned bottom side up; and although its fore and hind parts were almost hidden by the rank mass of growing stuff which covered the earth it laid on, I had a vague notion I could trace out a trunk and mebbe a tail-piece, also a pair of enormous ears and possibly a dorsal fin.

We did nothing but squat down in the weeds and gawp until it was so dark the thing wa'n't nothing but an outline against the sky. And as we nestled there, almost overcome with the enormity of the job, a low and hair raising wail come drifting over on the wind, and without further words, we folded our shirts like the Arabs and as silently stole away.

When we got back to the camp we were both pretty well tuckered out; partly by the day's work and partly at the thought of spending the night so close to a thing that could count its ancestors right on back to the time history tells us the earth was nothing but a gob of mud.

It was a sort of a strenuous night. We didn't dare to light a fire for fear the thing'd rise up in its might and come over and tromp us a couple of hundred feet down into the swamp. Consequently we lunched off of cold stuff and then carrying our blankets back into the weeds a way, curled up and made a pretty fair imitation of a couple of cowardly dubs sleeping. I know Joe didn't slumber very sound, for every time I come to—which was often—he was lying there listening to the thousand and one mysterious noises that sifts out of a night in a tropical morass.

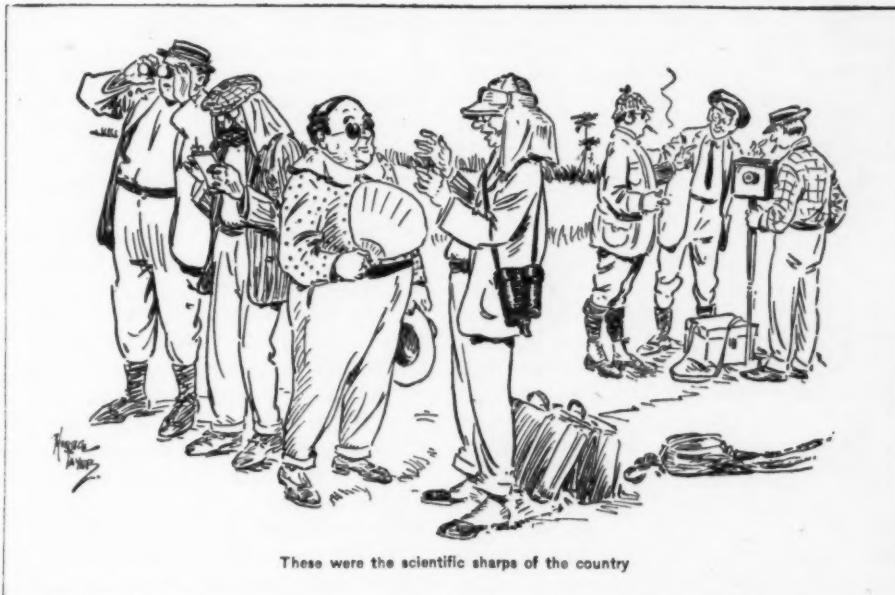
It was a wonderful night. The stars seemed to hang down in the big, blue bowl overhead so close I could almost imagine it possible to reach up and pull them out by the roots, while the soft wind went whispering through the thick

mass of vegetation, raising and falling as if warning us against tampering with a thing so gigantic and ancient that it made the birth of Eve look like a matter of modern surgery. I aint given to sleeplessness, but I don't know as I ever regretted that night so far from civilization; for it took me back to the ones on the farm when the world seemed a heap sight bigger to me than it does now and there wasn't a trouble in sight.

At the first sign of daybreak we were up and doing. We made a breakfast off some canned stuff and crackers, and as soon as it was light enough so that we wouldn't go astray off the quaking bog into some alligator's mouth, we stripped ourselves to light marching order and set out on the trail we'd broken the night before. By the time we'd reached our vantage point of the previous evening I can't say that either one of us had any more courage than'd been sufficient to capture a canary, and particularly so when we crowded through a big clump of swamp ferns and come out to where we could sight the monster, lying just where it had the night before.

We slunk back into the weeds and sot down to hold a council of war. At the lowest estimate the Docus was a half or five-eighths of a mile inland on what seemed to be an island, said island being rendered unattainable by us because of a streak of water—or ink—another half mile across, and as we could distinctly see, inhabited by several specimens of the Alligator-Hungeroso and other *babilli* too dangerous to monkey with or mention.

Joe's first suggestion was to go back a day's journey and see if we couldn't get round to the place in the launch we'd left back at our first landin' spot, but I promptly put the kibosh on that as being altogether too arduous a job, not to mention putting ourselves in a position where we couldn't make our escape from this benighted place if the Diplodocus took it into its head to get up and saunter around and obliterate us from the landscape. Then he suggested taking off our duds and calmly swimming over so that we could get a better view.



These were the scientific sharps of the country

I said nothing to this later one; just looked sarcastic at him and pointed to three or four open-faced samples of valise material drifting round in front as if waiting for a couple of durn fools to make their initial—and finishing—dive, and he made a gesture with his hand as if he'd given up offering any more ideas.

"For my part," I says slowly, "I'm distinctly opposed to trying to bag this 'ere zoölogical specimen without plenty of help. We wa'n't sent down here to be mashed to a jelly—nor yet to furnish a delicacy for any primeval monstrosity. We're here as advance scouts in the cause of education. And as scouts, it seems the part of cautious men that we take mighty good care of ourselves, otherwise the world'll never know what we've discovered."

He nodded.

"I make and second the motion," I continues, "that we set out to see if that patch of land has any entrance or exit beside this moat of liquid mud and reptiles."

"That's very logical reasoning," he responds, brisk-like. "Very."

We set off to round up the Docus on its resting place. It was a tolerable big piece of ground, about the size of a quarter-section I should say, and before we'd made half the circuit the sun was shining down perpendicular and the sweat was pouring off us in globules the size of glass beads, while from tumbling into hidden bog holes, we'd altered our complexions from the shade of an old russet shoe to patent-leather.

Explorers have it tough: I don't care whether it's on ice or swamp. There aint one single accommodation, not even good drinking water. And by the time we'd got back to our starting point, late in the afternoon, we had circled the whole farm, seen the Docus from every point of the compass—barring up and down—and come to the conclusion, as we hadn't seen it move, it must be a female hatching out a nest of eggs.

"This throwing a butterfly net over a Diplodocus looks like something of a job," Joe says, musingly.

"Looks like!" I exclaims. "Looks like! It *is!* You don't figure we're going to rush out onto that little spot of earth, rope, throw and hog-tie that eighty or

ninety ton insect, and after starving it into submission so's it'll eat out of our hands, bridle and ride it out into civilization, do ye?"

"Nope, not exactly," he responds meek-like, "but I kinder thought you'd got something in the way of a plan mapped out by this time."

"I have," I says grand-like, "a plan that'll let all the credit that's accruing come to us. I suggest that we scoot back to Miami, wire the Old Man the details as we've found them, let him swear in an army if he wants one, and come down here and invade this swamp in such force the Docus'll be too scared to raise a finger. Then we'll chloroform it or turn the gas on until it's unconscious, and tote it out to gladden the eyes of the Great American Public. All without further risk to life and limb, and as far as I can see, perfectly logical."

"Sounds all to the gladsome," Joe responds, "but supposing Mrs. Docus takes it into her head to move while we're absent, what then?"

"Wa-all," I says meditating-like, "a microbe the heft of her ought to leave something besides fairy footprints *en-passant*—and we can trail her to her burrow, can't we?"

It aint necessary to give you the details of our trip back to Miami, but when we reached there we'd hurried so we had callouses on our hands the size of warts on a horse's leg, and was enu-eed to death with takin' turns at persuading the pesky gasoline motor to speak without stuttering.

After we'd fed and scrubbed down somewhere near to our real cuticle, we crawled into a couple of clean shirts and sauntered over to the Western Union office to rent it for the rest of the afternoon. I'll bet it took quite a nice piece of change out of the ticket-wagon to pay for my conversation, for I wa'n't sparing of words, being just as prodigal with little ones like "a" and "an" as if they weighed six syllables apiece. I told the results of our search right down to the minutest details; of how we'd sighted the Docus, of our surmises as to its sex,

of the probable results if we'd tackled it alone, and all in all, figuratively speaking, set up such a cry for help from the North that the Boss couldn't have been human and disregarded it. Then we adjourned the meeting to a wet-goods emporium across the street and waited for a reply.

The Boss's wa'n't so explicit as mine had been, simply saying that he was on the jump to gather reinforcements, and that he'd have the whole army on the move before the following day. Joe and I couldn't conjecture as to just what preparations he'd made, but knowing him as we did, and the importance of the game, we could imagine the scene around the winter quarters must have resembled moving day in King Solomon's household.

It was a long four days—days made longer by the uncertainty as to whether we'd find our Docus in the same spot we'd left her; but on the evening of the fourth we got a wire from the Old Man that he was ong-route and expected to be on the ground by the following morning.

Joe and I were up at day-break, and when a special train made up of wrecking derricks, Pullman coaches and three or four of our big baggage cars, with kitchens attached, pulled into the station and the Boss stepped down, rheumatic-like, from the head end of the sleeper, I felt as if a mighty heavy load had been lifted off my mind—for a Docus aint no light-weight, either mental or physical.

Before we could more than give him the glad hand preparatory to starting in on our story, out from the Pullman behind him began trickling the most mixed up collection of male freaks I'd run across in years—and I'd become somewhat familiar with freaks. First, out jostled fifteen or twenty photograph men with picture-taking machinery—movable and stationary—ranging from postal-card size to horse-blanket, ready and primed to flood the educated world with speaking likenesses of Mrs. Docus. Right behind them crowded a long-haired aggregation, some wearing blue

goggles and some specs, most of them with that staring, preoccupied look that goes with too much overload on the brain, and all of them fairly creaking under a weight of books, portfolios and other signs of learning, for these were the scientific sharps of the country. All tangled up with them came a squad of newspaper writers, three or four big-game hunters, a half-dozen good sports—friends of the Old Man—and last but not by no means least, the only real capable geezer in the bunch, the boss canvasman from the winter quarters.

In the meantime we'd grown so interested in watching the ee-lect pile out that we hadn't taken any notice of the rank and file farther down the track until we found ourselves surrounded by about the roughest, toughest looking rabble of circus huskies to be found in the original thirteen states. Then I sensed what the Boss had been about. He intended to take that Docus back to the North if he had to divide it up and lug it back in pieces, so he'd brought sufficient hired men to do it. For an instant I felt sorry for Mrs. Docus, for when that unwashed, unshorn mob, egged on by the beautiful and expressive language of the boss canvasman, was turned loose on her, with several tons of strategy furnished by us brainy ones—and three carloads of hoisting, moving and transporting machinery furnished by the Boss—I couldn't see a chance for her even if she'd been four times as big and six times as dangerous as she was said to be.

"What are ye running?" I inquires, some sarcastic, of the Old Man, "a personally conducted tour of the Southland or a carpet-bagger's excursion to influence the coming election?"

"Advertising," he whispers behind his hand. "You don't think The Biggest Show on Earth's going to lose this gilt-edged opportunity to boost itself, do you?"

"You certainly are going some," I responds, "and considerable expensive."

"You aint seen the Northern papers lately, have you?" he interrogates with pride in his accents.

"Nope," I says, "we've been studying Nature."

"They're fairly teeming with the news of the discovery," he says joyfully, "and the whole scientific world is practically holding its breath until we can get the hooks into a Diplodocus. Why, Tommy," he continues, his chest inflating until I sorter edged a trifle to one side for fear of losing an eye from a flying vest-button, "this is the greatest find the world has ever saw. I don't believe you fellows—with your stunted educations—realize the enormity of it. Just think, in a week or so the whole population of the globe'll be rushing to the shores of the western hemisphere to feast their eyes on a critter which dates right on back to the Age of Ooze, when snakes had wings and birds wore fins and scales. It's wonderful! And to think I've put you two guys in a position where your names'll go rolling down the corridors of Time as the discoverers of it. Why, Rubekin's Bitters, Bill Shakespeare and—and Tammany Hall will be nothing but vague memories long centuries before the illustrious handles of you two'll be forgot. Aint ye grateful?"

"Some," I rejoins dry-like. "But, Boss, y'understand that a Docus in hand is worth a whole flock on a geranium. We aint got *this* one to the stage where it'll stand on its hindlegs and bark like a dog yet."

"Nope, we aint," he responds energetic-like, "but Tommy, I'm going to have that 'ere prehistoric thing occupying a stool in our collection of wonders if I have to chase him all over North America—and mebbe farther. Y'understand this aint for personal aggrandizement alone, nor yet for the sake of boozing the show; it's for the nobler and grander purpose of showing the inhabitants of the world what a lot they've got to be thankful for that these 'ere monstrosities don't go wandering 'round over the earth's surface *now*, as they did some years back. That's the object I'm aiming for—and the Biggest Show on Earth stands ready to use up every blamed bit of its ammunition just to hit the target once."



"Portable wireless outfit for the Associated Press," he explains

"Very creditable aspirations," I muses thoughtful-like. "Very. But," as I noticed three big canvasmen and five waiters all tangled up in a mass emerge from the doorway of a little eating place across the road from the station, "I'm under the impression we ought to be getting the army into some sort of shape to get out of town early or they'll all be jailed for having too much Northern energy."

He yelled to the boss canvasman, and arming ourselves with a few bale-sticks lying near, we all sauntered over to sorter quell the disturbance which threatened to end in real violence.

It aint a difficult job to bring order out of chaos when the director handling the baton is the gent who pays the wages; therefore a few strokes sufficed to settle the matter to everybody's satisfaction—barring eight—and we drilled back to the baggage cars and begun unloading the paraphernalia.

The Boss had done noble. He had the completest outfit for big game hunting conceivable. Collapsible boats, shelter tents, camp equipment and sup-

plies enough to keep the chase going for the next six months. I was pretty well acquainted with the bulk of the stuff as it came trundling out of the cars, but when a lot of big packing-cases slid into sight under the supervision of a long gent in yellow overalls, and another consignment consisting of a half-dozen big carboys of some sort of liquid hove into view with a red necktied, wild-eyed cuss doing the overseer act, I kinder went fishing for information.

"What means all that etcetterry?" I interrogates to the Old Man.

"That 'ere combination," he responds, sticking his right thumb into the arm-hole of his variegated vest, "is one cal-lated to terrorize any pre-Adamite mammal that ever straddled up through the centuries. The first mentioned packages contain a thing which aint been exploited yet to any great extent—a quadri-plane—likewise its foster father, who's figuring on making reputation by volunteering his services. The second freak of nature is an amateur anarchist who's going to demonstrate on the Docus what his peculiar brand of bombs'll do

to the Russian rulers of the future. He makes great claims for their sedative properties, and if Mr. Bird-man and Mr. Dope-fiend make anywhere near as good as they've promised, this cornering the market on Docuses will be nothing more strenuous than a huskin'-bee or a quilt-tying contest; just walk in, bind it hand and foot and cart it out to let it spread its beauty on an admiring world. How's that?"

"Sounds good," I admits some doubtful, "but how do these batty gents get into the game?"

"The aviator goes aloft carrying the Siberian Exile and his dope with him. They sail over the Docus as it lays snoozing away on the earth below, and down come the bladders full of sleeping potion all around him until us strong-arm men rush in and do the lashed-to-the-mast act. After that it's up to me to figure out a way of getting him back to civilization. That's easy, aint it?"

"Tolerably," I concedes without great enthusiasm. "Tolerably."

No body of men can beat a bunch of circus workers in getting under way—they're trained to it. So, inside of an

hour, the whole cavalcade filed out of town toward the North, and by mid-afternoon were going into camp on the outskirts of the big swamp, picture men, newspaper men, professors and circuses. It was an exhilarating sight.

There aint no use in detailing the trip north again; I've done that already. And nothing of any importance transpired, barring the sufferings of the educational branch, which didn't seem to thrive on bug bites and other tropical incidentals. Of course we wa'n't as long at it as Joe and I'd been, owing to the fact that we'd made the trip twice and were getting somewhat acquainted with the route; consequently ten days later, in the evening, we were sliding down the little overgrown canal about a hundred strong, headed for the landing place we'd laid up against before.

Everybody was as glad to get to land again as we'd been, and no sooner had we made camp than three or four of the newspaper gents struck off into the jungle for a tall cypress a hundred feet or more high.

"What's doing?" I queries of the chap who was uncoiling a lot of wire.



"Portable wireless outfit for the Associated Press," he explains, and hustles away into the underbrush toward the tree, leaving me to admire the Boss's ideas for boosting a show.

Almost immediately the aviator gent set to work getting his flying machine un-crated, and before dusk had settled down he had it taking on the appearance of a four-storied butterfly, while the anarchist was hustling round filling up little bladders with a dope that looked mean enough to've put an Egyptian mummy to sleep, let alone a poor defenseless Diplodocus. All the while this scientific and murderous stuff was taking shape, the Boss was picking out and drilling fifteen or twenty of the heavy-weight circus huskies as to how they were to conduct themselves in capturing such a distinguished beast, and as fast as one qualified, he was fitted out with one of those newly invented gas- and smoke-proof fire helmets to keep from falling under the influence of the stuff the wild-eyed Russian was mixing.

About dark Joe and I took the lead, and followed by the whole educational squad, stole softly through the brush to where we had first sighted the Docus. There it laid, dorsal fin and all, softly weaving in the halfgloom, every now and then a low sort of a wail sifting over to us on the breeze as if it was just getting yawned and thinking of going to sleep.

I thought the professors and the newspaper men would go bug-house. They deployed as far as they could without taking to the bog and strained their eyes across the swale to where it lay, taking notes and mosquito bites with equal appetite, while Joe and I just settled back comfortably in the weeds, sopping up the plaudits of our countrymen, feeling that Chris Columbus and Peary hadn't so much on us after all. It was a delightful sensation, you bet.

A half-hour later it had got so dark you could hardly tell who your next door neighbor was; and then the canvasmen come struggling through the undergrowth with the collapsible skiffs to ferry the attacking force over the creek.

When Joe and I, as befits discoverers, stepped ashore on the quarter-section where the game lay sleeping the sleep of the prehistoric, I couldn't help but be reminded of a tale I read a long time ago about Mariana and the Moated Grange.

The Boss gathered his selectmen in the bushes and put them through their lessons in a whisper, and a few minutes after he'd finished, from behind us come the greatest whirring and clattering I've ever heard.

"Good Lord," I says to him in an undertone, "what's that?"

"The aviator tuning up his machine," he explains.

"If he don't wake up this 'ere animal in front of us," I rejoins, "it'll be mighty strange; and if he *does* and he goes to ravaging 'round to see what in blazes is interfering with his nap, me for the canal of ink and reptiles without a moment's hesitation—and glad of the chance."

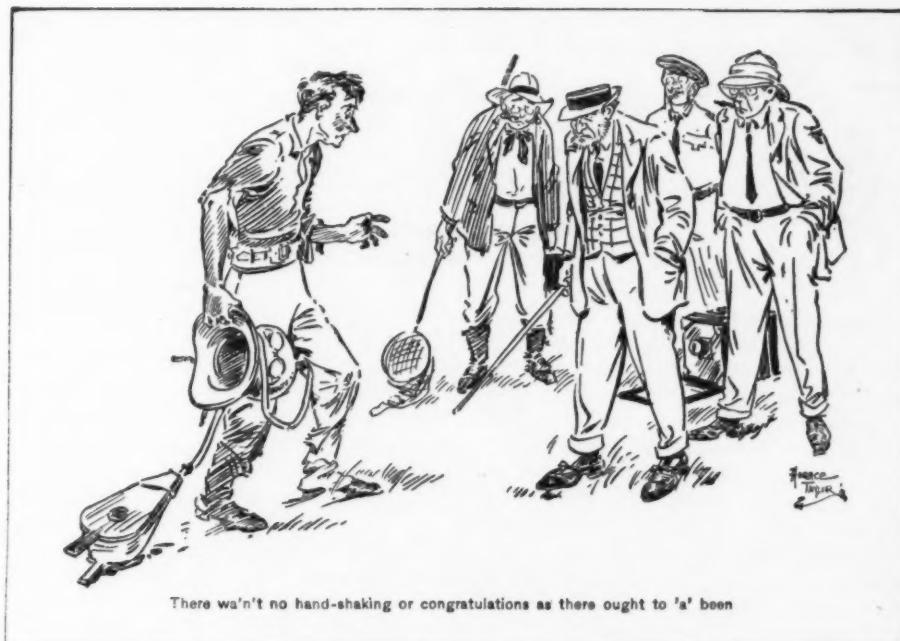
"Aw, them sort of critters sleep sound," he answers, kinder patronizing. "Natural History tells us that. Takes an hour for them to get to sleep and an hour and a half to wake up."

"Kind of human characteristic, after all, aint it?" I muses.

"Ya-as," he responds, and directly I heard the whirring sound sorter elevate itself and knew the poor, old Diplodocus was on its way to the menagerie from that instant. I felt kinder conscience stricken for a minute or two to be the humble instrument of chucking it into captivity, but my remorse was short lived, for almost immediately the buzzing come down from above and I knew I ought to be up and doing.

A half-minute later, down come something a few hundred feet ahead of us in the brush with a mellow squash, and the next instant the near vicinity begun to smell like the windward side of a glue factory on a summer morning.

Into my head-piece I ducked, and not a second too soon, for the next gent to me, a high-brow from the Smithsonian Institute, went headlong into the weeds, as sound asleep as Rip Van Win-



There wa'n't no hand-shaking or congratulations as there ought to 'a' been

kle, and I understand he didn't wake up until away along into daylight the next day, thereby missing the whole show.

The helmet didn't quite cover my ears, and consequently I could locate the landing place of most of the bomb-bladders from above, involuntarily ducking three or four times to avoid several which seemed to come down mighty near our neighborhood. Then the whirring veered off to the south and we concluded that Mr. King-killer'd shot his last ball. We waited a sufficient length of time to allow the stuff to soak into its senses, and at a signal from the Boss, we three—Joe, he and I—broke cover and advanced, bold-like, on the big insect.

As we crept up a trifle closer I imagined I could make out the dorsal fin waving irregularly in the night breeze against the sky-line. And low down on the earth between what I took for its outstretched legs, a much darker spot loomed out from the background, something like an open door does in the side of a barn on a dead, dark night.

I reckoned it must be the great cavity

under its dewlap, that is, if such monstrosities have dewlaps, and nudging the Old Man and Joe to signify the time had arrived for real action, I swung the big acetylene search light I'd taken from the bow of the launch around and got ready to shift the slide.

Some theoretical cuss has evolved the idea that when a feller's in what he calls the "dire extremity," his mind begins to grovel into the past and gather up all the bad things he's done from his cradle right on through to his present crime. I guess he's right; for as that broad band of light shot out and disclosed a skull the size of a tobacco hogshead, with two of the wickedest little red eyes glaring out at us a matter of eight or ten feet off the ground, my memory started in to unreeling evil deeds like the film in a moving-picture machine. At first I was that petrified I couldn't realize where we'd fell down in our cal'lations. Then it flashed into my mind that we hadn't taken into consideration that plain, ordinary dope, compounded especially for a Rooshian Czar, wouldn't faze a critter who'd

passed up through every sedative period of the world from coal gas to hypnotism without battin' an eye.

I ought to've skipped right off. I can see that now, and probably would if I hadn't felt the frost creeping into my feet, thereby fastening me to the earth. And that in a temperature of a hundred and four.

For a space of ten or fifteen years—it may have been seconds, I'd lost all trace of time—we glared at each other, and if looks could kill, I'd be loafing on some cloud oiling my feathers against another deluge this minute. Then the big heap began to get to its feet, majestic-like, until it loomed up above me like the First Baptist Church of Bridgeport. At that, my pedal extremities thawed out suddenly and I turned to Joe and the Old Man to intimate that we'd be safer elsewhere. I needn't have taken the trouble; they'd seen the necessity at their first glance and were probably three miles away and still running. Then the thing let out a snort like a thousand-horse boiler blowing off steam. If I'd had any doubts before, that blast settled them, conclusive-like. I immediately left the lamp hanging in the air and started toward the equator, next stop unscheduled, with eighty or a hundred tons of Pliocene live stock lumbering along behind, making that quivery, tropical island wave up and down like a grass carpet in a cyclone at every step.

I haven't any idea as to how or when I struck the ditch of ink and alligators, but reckon I must have gone to the bottom and walked across. I do have a faint recollection of scooting up through the mud on the opposite bank so swift I busted loose from my gas muzzle, but from then on to the steenth mile or so, all I can recall is my trying to get my right foot in front of my left as far and as fast as possible.

I can't give any accurate account as to how many real miles I covered, for I missed hitting some complete. But as I sizzled out of a big clump of swamp stuff into a sort of an open space, I woke up to the fact that I'd been running away from my own thunder; every-

thing behind me was as quiet as a country burying ground at midnight.

I went to the sod, and after about half an hour began to breathe and think normal again. I had no idea of the time, as I'd left near all my wardrobe scattered along on the bushes bordering my right of way, so I crawled into a bunch of dry swampgrass and laid by until daylight before starting in to retrace my steps to where I could pick up and classify the gents who'd been slower on foot than I'd been.

It was getting gray in the east before I set out on the back trail, and just as the sun come swinging up into the sky like a red-hot ball of copper, out I come into a big, spongy section of morass I hadn't any recollection of but must have skimmed over the night before—as a fragment of blue flannel shirt dangling from a twelve-foot bramble signified. I had some doubts as to the wisdom of going back that way, but just as I'd made up my mind to the contrary, away off to the north'ard I spied a lot of little ant-like figures sorter bustling or standing round in a circle. I stood and watched them for some time before I decided on an advance.

After I'd picked my way mebbe two-thirds across the bog, I could distinguish the lad in the yeller overalls. And as I drew closer, I made out the Old Man's variegated vest standing a little apart with Joe, both of them swabbing their faces as if in a great sweat or deep sorrow. I yelled and got the sign to heave ahead.

When I come up to the assemblage there wa'n't no hand-shaking or congratulations as there ought to 'a' been, seeing all I'd escaped from; they just looked woe-begone and pointed sad-like off into the middle of a twenty acre greasy-black swale upon the surface of which a few air bubbles the size of medicine balls still floated, while a few rods off to our right, the whole scientific bunch stood bareheaded around a long, glossy domed gent from Vassar who was solemnly unloading his memory of a mixture of the Episcopal burial service and the Ten Commandments.



Photograph by Byron, New York

David Warfield as *Peter Grimm* in David Belasco's play, "The Return of Peter Grimm"

THAT patiently sought miracle of the theatre, the play that is "different"—the play that never seems to be a play, but rather the actual experience of living men and women—has come at last in "Bunty Pulls The Strings." So filled is this rare comedy by Mr. Graham Moffat with the very breath of life, so flavored is it with the essence of human nature, that to watch its quaint and amusing characters in the daily experiences of their humble lives is like a visit to the dour Calvinistic village of Lintie Haugh in Bonnie Scotland which is its scene. And what more can be asked in the theatre than an illusion which bears not a single trace of pre-meditated situations and thinly disguised conventions as old as the stage itself, but is, instead, like a page taken from the great book of human existence?

Soon "Bunty" companies will be

spreading the charms of this delicious stage story of Scottish life and character to scores of other cities, for the play is quite too unusual to be confined a whole season to New York. Thousands to whom the theatres are not always accessible will be curious to know its details and to understand the secret of its appeal. So it is due to readers of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE to describe "Bunty" somewhat minutely, although I fear it will be difficult to convey much more than a suggestion of that elusive atmosphere of heather and thistle upon which its charm so largely depends.

Know then, that the village of Lintie Haugh lies somewhere in the Scottish Lowlands at no great distance from Glasgow and that its bigoted inhabitants who practice outwardly the form of rigid Calvinistic faith, but think little of its inward spirit, live not to-day

but half a century ago in the picturesque era of towering beaver hats and flowing hoopskirts. Foremost in the community as a model of righteousness is *Tammas Biggar*, the village grocer and elder of the kirk, on Sundays an example of holy rectitude and devoutness, but on week days an outrageous old Pharisee and skinflint whose eyes are forever fixed upon the main chance. He bullies and thrashes his children, righteously avowing that it is for their souls' good, and keeps them in subjection to work without thanks or pay in his house and store. *Tammas* is a widower whose wife is two years dead, and now that *Bunty*, his shrewd, capable, sensible and unromantic daughter, is about to be married to *Weelum Sprunt*, a dull, child-minded carpenter who has been made an elder of the kirk at the unprecedented age of twenty-eight on account of phenomenal holiness, he is beginning to think of taking another spouse as the best means of avoiding the expense of a house-keeper.

It is this new matrimonial ambition that plunges old *Tammas Biggar* into the series of predicaments which is the source of the play's humorous satire and which gives quick-witted *Bunty* her chance to pull the strings that finally set his disrupted house in order. As has been said, *Tammas* is not entirely what he seems to the people of Lintie Haugh. Years in the past, and under another name, he courted and won the affection of *Eelen Dunlop* and then deserted her at the church when marriage stared him in the face, consigning her to a life of drudgery as boarding-house keeper for Glasgow college students. Quite as false had he also been to the confidence of *Susie Simpson*, a vindictive and vinegary old spinster who intrusted six hundred dollars to him for investment, which he dishonestly used to get his elder son out of trouble that was due entirely to his own harshness and neglect.

In *Tammas'* darkened sitting-room on a Sabbath morning, when in his best clothes he is preparing to make his weekly pretense of holiness at the kirk, and *Bunty* and her young brother, *Rab*, are studying their catechisms, these un-

comfortable secrets in his past life begin to come out. *Rab* has just committed the blasphemous offense of whistling one of the psalms and has been promised a sound thrashing on the morrow—for *Tammas* is not willing to break the Sabbath—when *Susie Simpson*, who is an aunt of *Weelum Sprunt*, appears. She has heard of the old hypocrite's intention of marrying again and has hit upon a way to get back her six hundred dollars by offering him a choice between herself and exposure. Note the quaint humor of the dialogue:

SUSIE—Ye'll need some one to help ye to rule that laddie, *Tammas*. (Refering to *Rab's* whistling a psalm on the Sabbath.)

TAMMAS—I can manage him mysel'! Thank ye.

SUSIE—And when *Bunty* gets married, wha's to look efter your hoose?

TAMMAS—Time enough to think of that.

SUSIE—There's no so much time. I'm tellt it's to be in August or September.

TAMMAS—So I believe. When *Bunty* leaves me I'll miss her mither mair than ever.

SUSIE—Ye've been a widda-man for twa years noo, and if ye took a second it would be quite decent and respectable.

TAMMAS—We'll no discuss it.

SUSIE—Ye're over sensitive in this matter, *Tammas*. The thing must be discussed, and frae every point of view. Ye canna do wantin' a hoosekeeper.

TAMMAS—No!

SUSIE—An ordinary hoosekeeper would want a wage.

TAMMAS—Certainly!

SUSIE—So ye see a wife would serve the self-same purpose and come cheaper.

TAMMAS—Yes, that's a fac'; but is't not time ye were dressing for the kirk?

SUSIE—I've just my bonnet to put on. *Tammas*, I've a serious maitter to settle wi' ye. I've been thinkin' that unless I can get some sort o' a place, such as hoosekeeper, for some one or ither, I'll be oblieged to get back the money ye invested for me. It's a hundred and twenty pound, ye ken. Ye have a' the papers.

TAMMAS—Ye want your money?

SUSIE—Ay, unless I can get a place.

TAMMAS—As hoosekeeper?

SUSIE—Exactly.

TAMMAS—An ordinar' hoosekeeper wi' a wage? (Encouraged.)

SUSIE—*Tammas*, ye know fine I'm no thinkin' o' a wage!

Photograph by Byron, New York

Joseph Brennan as *Andrew MacPherson*, Percy Helton as *William*, David Warfield as *Peter Grimm*, John Sainpolis as *Frederik*; Marie Bates as *Mrs. Bartholomewy*



TAMMAS—I see. Quite so. Weel, I'll need time to consider yer proposal, Miss Simpson.

SUSIE—Proposal! I propose nothing! Mr. Biggar, such an insinuation is unworthy o' ye!

TAMMAS—I didna say it was a proposal o' marriage. Ye made a proposal that I should get ye your money or make ye ma hoosekeeper.

SUSIE—I mentioned no names. I'll be any respectable man's hoosekeeper.

TAMMAS—But this is a business maitter, and no a subiect for the Sabbath day. I wunner at ye mentionin' it. We'll discuss it the morn.

SUSIE—Thank ye, Tammas. The morn's mornin' will do fine.

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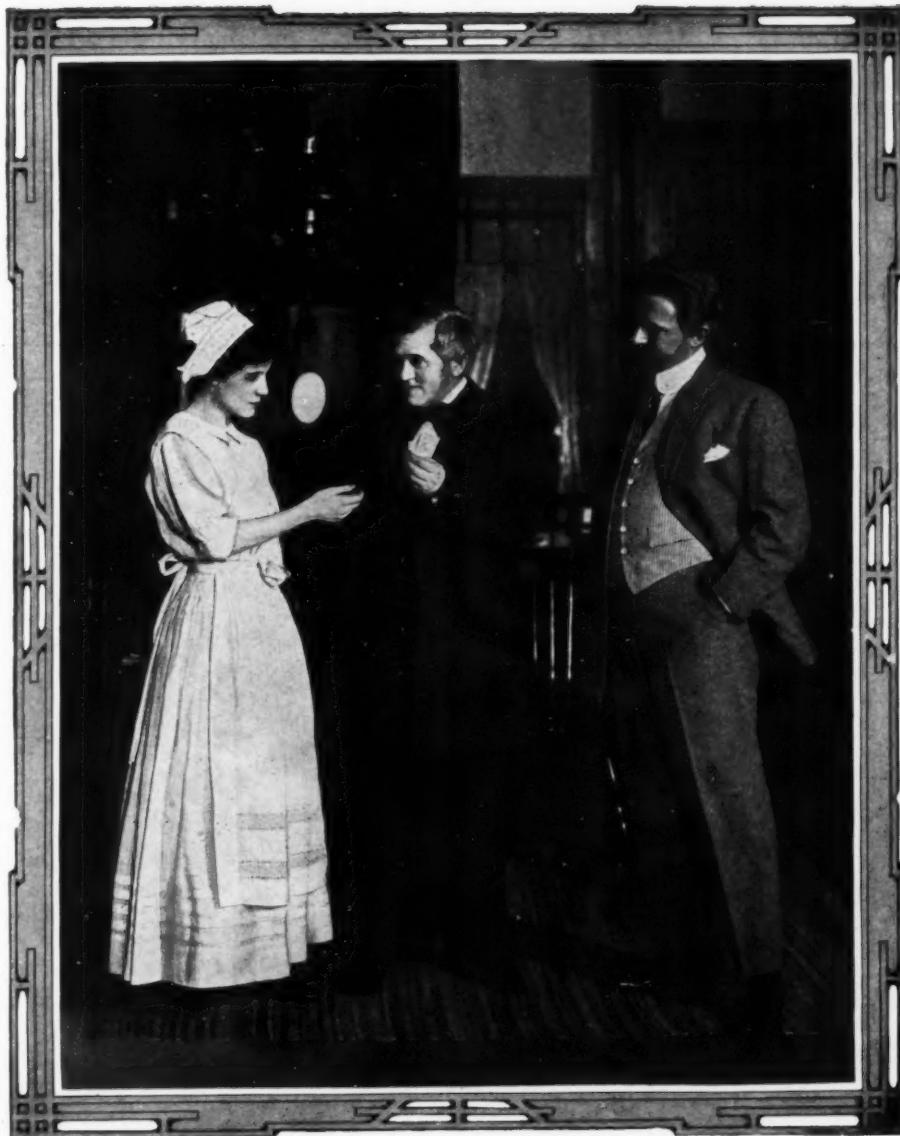
Having thus postponed the day of reckoning until the morrow—Sunday being deemed too holy for so material a matter—the sanctimonious *Tammas* breathes easier until suddenly his feeling of security is again shaken by the arrival of *Eelen Dunlop* and her niece *Teenie*—the same *Eelen* from whom he fled even at the altar twenty-five years before. This canny Scotch woman, weary of a boarding-house keeper's life, is also anxious to fill the void in the widower's heart and the place in his household which *Bunty* is soon to vacate, but with better sense, born of greater experience with the world and men, she approaches the question more tactfully.

This double crisis in *Tammas Biggar's* affairs has been reached when, in the second act, *Bunty's* self-righteous sweetheart, the blockhead *Weelum*, is to undergo the momentous experience of standing, as elder, by the plate at the door of the kirk to greet the congregation and receive the coppers as they assemble for worship. With what humorous fidelity Mr. Moffat has caught and reflected the bigotry and sanctimony of the Lintie Haugh community of religious pretenders none but those who have seen a performance of his play can quite appreciate.

The scene is now outside the little vine-covered kirk, with its wall-enclosed yard and with rolling, heather-grown landscape stretching in the distance. Gradually the congregation, a most

amusing collection of quaint and queer types, assembles. The embarrassed, self-conscious *Weelum* stands rigidly behind the plate, saying to each newcomer the wrong thing in his confusion. The last worshiper finally arrives. Lustily the ancient beadle tolls the bell but the minister fails to put in an appearance. Everything, including *Weelum's* collar, goes awry at his first entrance into the official religious life of Lintie Haugh, but these accidents are as nothing compared to what comes later when his vindictive aunt, *Susie Simpson*, convinced now that *Tammas*' delay is only a clever ruse to escape retribution, appears at the kirk to denounce him before the entire congregation as a thief and a hypocrite, and to demand his instant arrest. *Bunty* expostulates in vain. *Weelum* pleads to no purpose. The enraged spinster will have her own way and the village policeman, followed by a swarm of inquisitive worshipers, is summoned from his pew. Nobly the valiant *Bunty* rises to the occasion. *Tammas* is denounced and is on the verge of being forever disgraced as a whitened sepulcher and a fraud when his daughter, coming bravely to his rescue, puts the vixenish *Susan* to rout, at the moment of her triumphant revenge, by asserting that the money which her father is accused of appropriating is safe under lock and key at home, and that the spinster can have it whenever she puts in a claim for it. Actually, however, the money *Bunty* has in mind is the little hoard which she and *Weelum* have been saving bit by bit against the glad day when, in the bonds of matrimony, they will set up housekeeping. And little does the wretched *Weelum* realize this new crisis into which he has plunged when he proposes to the congregation, in his capacity as elder, a vote of confidence in his prospective father-in-law, only to be informed by the now furious *Susie* that for his disloyalty to her interests she will cut him forever from her will.

The final act returns to *Tammas Biggar's* sitting-room on Monday morning. That sanctimonious hypocrite, though he has balked at signing the receipt for the loan which the shrewd *Bunty* has drawn up, has recovered his composure suffi-



Photograph by Byron, New York
Janet Dunbar as *Kathrien*; David Warfield as *Peter Grimm*; John Sainpolis as *Frederik*
in "The Return of Peter Grimm"

ciently to remember the thrashing he had promised *Rab* on the day before. He has also come to have a sentimental regard for *Eelen Dunlop*, who had remained his sympathetic adherent during the luckless incident at the kirk. Indeed he has about resolved to ask *Eelen* to be his wife, provided *Bunty* will ascertain if the lady possesses the requisite qualifications of

an economical housekeeper, a commission which *Bunty* promptly accepts and which leads to a deliciously amusing scene in which the shrewd Scotch lassie deftly extracts the desired information from the unsuspecting boarding-house landlady. Meanwhile *Weelum*, mournfully disconsolate but bravely trying to appear resigned at the postponement of

his marriage, is cudgeling his slow brains in an effort to devise a means of hastening his wedding day.

The appearance of *Rab*, late for breakfast, brings up again the subject of the thrashing and leads not only him but even the faithful *Bunty* into their first open defiance of *Tammas*' harsh paternal authority. How *Bunty* pulls the strings again and saves her young brother from the strap is best told in the exact words of the characters.

BUNTY—Fayther, if ye thrash Rab, ye can tak' my keys and thrash me, too!

TAMMAS—Bunty, have ye ta'en leave o' your senses? Is my authority to be set at nocht by my ain bairns?

BUNTY—Bairns have a habit o' growin' up to be men and women, and authority may tak' a stick to breck its ain back! I have always obeyed you till noo, but not another hand's turn will I do in this hoose if ye persist!

TAMMAS—So ye have combined against me?

BUNTY—We've thrown up our thankless, unpaid jobs! Scour your ain blankets and keep your ain hoose. I'm leavin'!

TAMMAS—Ye needna think ye'll coerce me, Bunty! Ye canna leave!

BUNTY—Can I no? Ye're mistaken this time, as I'll show you! (Goes to the door.) *Weelum*!

WEELUM—Aye, I'm comin'!

TAMMAS—(To *Rab*) Are ye going to obey me, sir?

RAB—No' unless ye let me aff!

TAMMAS—Ye dour deevil!

BUNTY—(Taking *Weelum's* arm.) See, *Weelum*. Tell me, noo, how soon is it possible for you and me to get married?

WEELUM—Are ye askin' that to tease me?

BUNTY—No.

WEELUM—But we haena the money to furnish!

BUNTY—I ken, but we have a little. Noo, supposin' we dinna furnish, but just went into lodgings for a while, what's the very soonest we could bring it aff?

WEELUM—Ye really mean it?

BUNTY—Maybe; that depends:

WEELUM—Leave it to me! I'll consult the registrar and we'll be married like winkie!

BUNTY—Weel, then, if fayther thrashes Rab, I'll gie ye full liberty to make the arrangements.

WEELUM—Oh, that'll be all right! Rab'll go through that for my sake! (Misunderstanding *Bunty's* meaning.)

RAB—Oh, indeed, will I?

WEELUM—Ye know, Rab, I'd do as much for you!

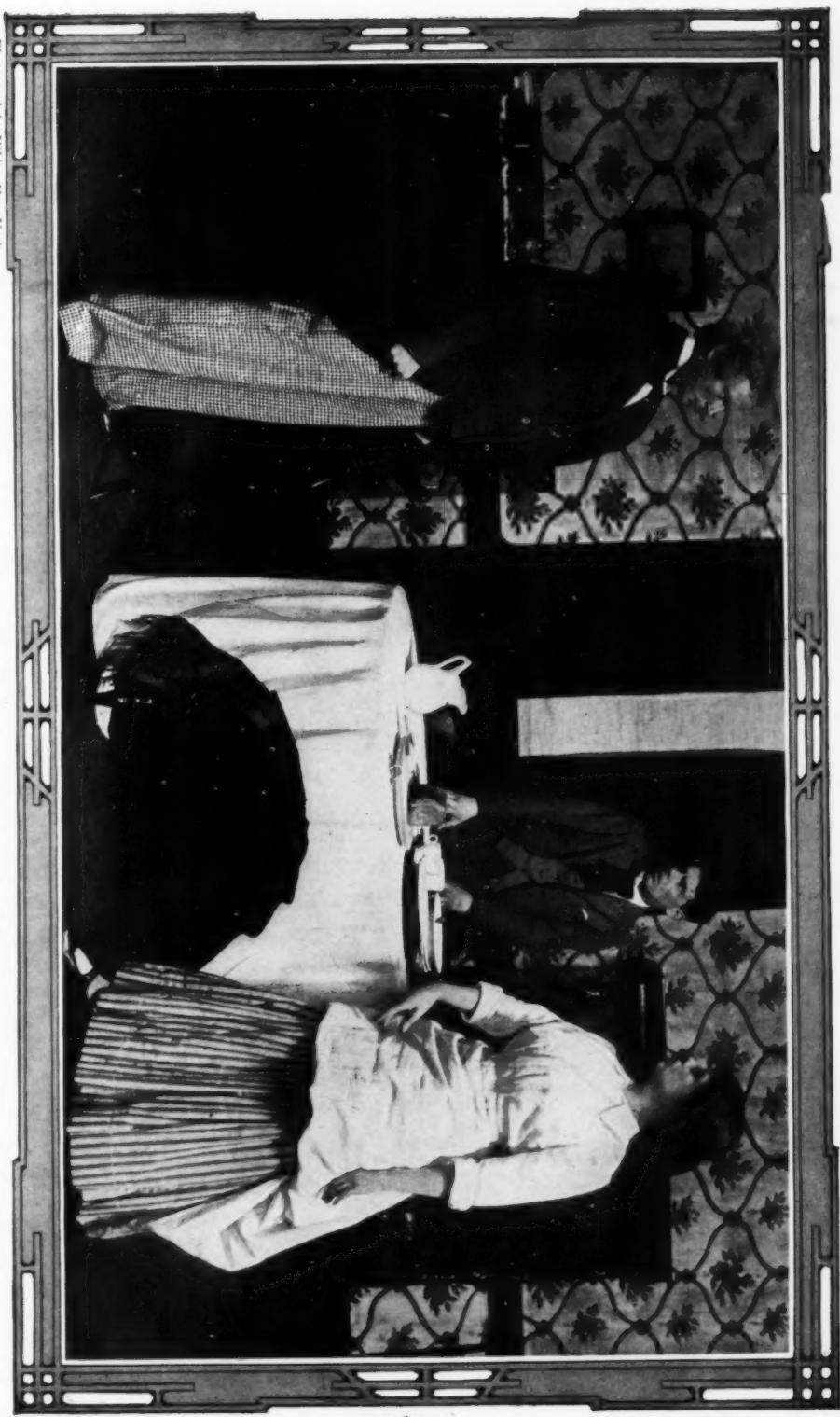
TAMMAS—Rab, pick up that key an' go to the shop! I'll let ye off this time!

[All rights to the foregoing dialogue are reserved by the Messrs. Shubert and William A. Brady.—Editor.]

Thanks to *Bunty's* quick intelligence, which she now exercises in her own interest, it is not necessary for the wretched *Weelum* to earn again the sacrificed savings requisite to his matrimonial plans. The clever, intuitive girl, catching a remark about *Susie Simpson* which her sweetheart happens to let fall, subjects him to a cross examination, in the course of which she discovers that the close-fisted, venal spinster had no right to the money she entrusted to *Tammas* and that she herself had actually appropriated it from *Weelum* in his infancy, the sum being a part of an inheritance to which he was rightful heir.

This is the last string that *Bunty* pulls, though there is a final amusing scene in which *Tammas* proposes to *Eelen* and is accepted, ungraciously remarking as he turns his cheek for a betrothal kiss, "I'll no deny there's a wee touch o' sentiment in my case, but I want the home comforts." And it is hinted that, after the holy *Weelum* and the keen *Bunty* are made one, there may also be a chance for *Rab* to unite his fortunes with *Eelen's* niece, *Teenie*, before the altar in the kirk at Lintie Haugh.

The fact that "Bunty Pulls the Strings" is performed by a company which, with the single exception of Miss Mollie Pearson as *Bunty*, is composed of Scotch actors, gives a finishing touch to the freshest, most diverting *genre* comedy that I can recall in the last half-dozen years. As the players have hitherto been unknown to us, there is no need to go into details concerning their individual work, but in future seasons the names of Mr. Campbell Gullen, Miss Mollie Pearson, Mr. Sanderson Moffat, Miss Jean Cadell, Miss Amy Singleton and Mr. Edmond Beresford will suggest the delightfully imaginative characters of the dour *Tammas Biggar*, the resourceful *Bunty*, the self-righteous



Photograph by White, New York
Campbell Gullen as *Trumanus Biggar*; Edmond Beresford as *Ruth Biggar*; Mollie Pearson as *Bunty Biggar* in "Bunty Pulls the Strings"



Photograph by White, New York

Mollie Pearson as *Bunty Biggar* and Sanderson Moffat as *Weelum Sprunt* in "Bunty Pulls the Strings"

Weelum Sprunt, the viperish *Susie Simpson*, the amiable *Eelen Dunlop* and the often-thrashed *Rab*.

ADMIRERS of the genius of Mr. David Warfield—for the histrionic gift of this actor is worthy of superlative classification—need no longer turn to the gentle, lovable *Von Barwig* in "The

Music Master" as the supreme test of his ability. Hereafter Mr. Warfield will be recalled equally vividly, and with quite the same admiration, for his impersonation of *Peter Grimm*, first in the flesh and then in the spirit, in Mr. David Belasco's curious, wondrously pathetic and ingenious psychical drama, "The Return of Peter Grimm," which deals,



Maude Granger as *Mrs. Faraday* and Margaret Anglin as *Celia Faraday* in "Green Stockings"



Photograph by White, New York

Ruth Holt Boucicault as *Evelyn Trenchard*; Wallace Widdicombe as *James Raleigh*; Helen Langford as *Madge Rockingham*; Stanley Dark as *William Faraday* in "Green Stockings"

but not mawkishly, with death and the soul after its release from the body, and with the influence which the spirit world may exert over the land of the living. This play professes to hold no brief for the various present day movements in psychical research. It is a drama, not a treatise. It may or may not be accepted as truth. Its value lies in the power with which it appeals to the emotions of all who sit under its spell and the force with which it bends their sympathies to itself.

The single setting, a comfortable living-room, itself suggests the choleric but kindly nature of the old Dutch tulip grower who is the hero of the tale. Here was born and here all his life dwelt *Peter Grimm*, cultivating his plants and

planning for the welfare of those whom he loved and who loved him. Blind to the faults of his dissolute nephew, *Frederik*, his heart is set upon bringing about a marriage between this youth and his adopted niece, *Kathrien*, despite her evident greater affection for his secretary, *James Hartman*. And nothing pleases his bachelor nature more than to make happy the wan, little waif, *Willem*, whom he has adopted into his family, little suspecting that the friendless child is the son of *Frederik* by a poor girl whom he has deceived.

Doctor MacPherson, *Peter's* friend and physician, is a spiritualist, and many are the good natured tilts which he has with the old Dutchman, who has no faith



Photograph by White, New York

Gertrude Hitz as *Phyllis Faraday*; Iva Dawson as *Hon. Robert Tarver*; Maude Granger as *Mrs. Chisholm Faraday*; Arthur Lawrence as *Admiral Grice* in "Green Stockings"

in the return of the soul after death. During one of these discussions, when the pair have agreed that the first to die shall return and make his presence known to the other, the discordant blaring of a circus caravan is heard. A grotesque clown appears at the window singing an absurd ditty, "Mr. Rat has Come to Town." The frail little *Willem* is in an ecstasy and begs *Uncle Peter* to take him to the show. The kindly old man assents and, as the child darts away to purchase the tickets, draws his armchair before the fire, fills his old Dutch pipe and—dies of heart disease, a fate that has long menaced him.

In the second act, ten days after old *Peter's* death, his astral body returns to

the household he loved and guarded so well in life. The scales have fallen from the eyes of the spirit. From the brink of another life he sees the sad mistakes he committed in his earthly existence. His mission now is to save *Kathrien* from the unworthy nephew to whom, in his stubbornness and blindness, he has betrothed her. Unseen and unheard by those whom he would help, but always visible and audible to the audience, he resumes his place among them and endeavors by his spirit influence to undo the wrong which in the weakness of his earthly life he had wrought.

Mr. Warfield's successful feat of projecting across the footlights this apparition of a released soul and making it

appeal faithfully to his audience, not as a mortal but as a spirit, is, to my thinking, one of the really great achievements of modern drama. The stage has never before had another character quite like it. It bears no relation whatever to the ghost in "Hamlet" or to the supernatural manifestations occasionally encountered in other plays. Nothing in it smacks of the uncanny. This returned spirit appears dressed as in life. He enters the living-room through the door. He hangs his battered plug hat upon its accustomed peg. He speaks in a low and gentle but natural voice. Mr. Warfield's success in making plausible this spirit rôle is a triumph of sheer simplicity in acting. It grows out of his imagination and it grasps and conquers the imagination of his audience.

The melting pathos of it is the vain striving of *Peter Grimm's* spirit to make itself understood by the unseeing and unheeding mortals whom he would aid. At times he seems to make his presence felt, only to fail in the end. The abyss between him and the living, alas, is too wide to span. It is finally through the sensitive, tremulous soul of the child, *Willem*, wasted by a fever and nearing the brink of life over which old *Peter* has passed, that his message is delivered and his loved ones are saved. The child is made to recognize a photograph of his mother and by this, *Frederik* is influenced to confess his misdeeds.

Nothing could be more deeply pathetic than this final scene. The dying child is lying on a couch before the fire, the spirit of old *Peter Grimm* standing guard by his side. The little fellow draws the coverlet around him and goes to sleep. "I wish you the sweetest dreams a little boy ever had in this world," says the spirit, gently. Soon, as if from a great distance, are heard again the circus sounds, the blaring of the bands, the shouts of the performers and, mingled with them, snatches of the song of the clown, "Mr. Rat has Come to Town." Then *Peter*, saying, "Come, it is time to go," raises *Willem* to his shoulder and bears him through the door while the doctor, returning, sees only an inanimate form lying on the couch.

This achievement by Mr. Warfield and Mr. Belasco will make permanent theatrical history. Commercially, in New York, the drama is bound to rank among the season's great successes. Nor is the credit for the deep interest of the performance limited to the star. The sensitive, intelligent impersonation of little *Willem* by Master Percy Helton is a great asset to the play. Miss Janet Dunbar as *Kathrien*, Mr. Joseph Brennan as *Doctor MacPherson*, and Mr. William Boag and Miss Marie Bates as a minister and his wife, eager for the fleshpots, are only a few of the contributing agencies to the general effect.

THE yearning of the unloved spinster for the romantic attentions which a neglectful and unappreciative world of men has denied her ought to be one of the most pathetic of persistent recurrences in life. Yet such is the perversity of the male monsters who write a majority of our plays that they regard it as ready-made material for a comic plot.

The secret longing, the deception to which it may lead, and the unexpected embarrassments in which it may result, provide Mr. A. E. W. Mason with the amusing story of "Green Stockings" in which Miss Margaret Anglin is demonstrating that the sunny slopes of laughter are quite as accessible to her as the shadowy vales of grief. The heroine of the entanglement is *Celia Faraday*, the elder sister in a family of four girls. According to a time-honored custom she has been compelled to wear green stockings at so many of the wedding festivals of her more popular sisters that, when the youngest announces her betrothal, she invents a fictitious lover and gaily lets the rest into the secret of her prospective bliss. Thus she will avoid the detested green stockings that have been the badge of her spinsterhood and disgrace.

The wooer she creates out of her lively imagination is a gallant English army officer, *Colonel John Smith*, and her disclosure of the coming happy event in her life, which she makes on her return from a week at Southampton, is received with mingled amazement and relief by



Photograph by White, New York

Harold H. Forde as *Ivan* and Kitty Gordon as *Vivien Savary* in "The Enchantress"



Photograph by White, New York

Nellie McCoy as *Marion Love* in "The Enchantress"

her stodgy family, who respond with such encouraging exclamations as "Impossible!" "Never!" "At last!" and "God bless my soul!" To gain time poor *Celia*, now much disturbed, must invent the new fiction that her soldier sweetheart has suddenly been ordered away on an expedition to Somaliland. Next, to lend plausibility to this new assertion, she must write a love letter to her absent "*Wabbles*" which, having been carelessly

left lying on her desk, is put in the mail by *Phyllis*, her youngest sister.

A secret so burdening to an otherwise clear conscience *Celia* cannot keep alone so she makes a confidante of *Mrs. Chisholm Faraday*, a visiting aunt from Chicago whom she feels she can trust and who also is gifted with a sense of humor. Time wears on and at last it becomes advisable for *Celia* to kill off her absent lover. This homicide she accomplishes



Photograph by White, New York

Arthur Forrest as *Ozir* and Kitty Gordon as *Vivien Savary* in "The Enchantress"

painlessly, with *Mrs. Chisholm Faraday's* aid, by inserting in the London *Times* a death notice and glowing eulogy, which recites in detail how the valorous colonel was killed in action while fighting his country's battles in distant Africa. Her family reads the account and are quick to offer their consolation, but *Celia* bears up bravely, puts on becoming mourning for the sake of propriety, and generously asserts that a bereavement so personal must not be allowed to interfere with the social engagements of her relatives.

Now it happens that there is a real *Colonel Smith* in far away Somaliland and *Celia's* affectionate letter, mailed by *Phyllis*, has reached him in the course of time. Naturally he is much perplexed to

be addressed endearingly as "*Wabbles*" but greater is his amazement on his return to London a few months later when he reads the story of his death. Being a rich bachelor who relishes a good joke, he makes up his mind to cultivate the acquaintance of his unknown *fiancée* and so presents himself at the *Faraday* country-house, not in his own identity but as *Captain Vasasour*, a messmate of the departed colonel, whose dying request was that he should deliver to *Celia* a last tender message and a few personal belongings as keepsakes.

Smith, now *Vasasour*, finds the spinster in black and disconsolate. To say that she is also surprised is putting the situation mildly. With supreme effort she keeps her self-control but her aunt

flies off into a fit of hysterics which, if it does not let the cat out of the bag at the moment, provides a most amusing scene.

The masquerading *Vasasour* manages to carry off his part of the deception well. He sighs as he recalls the virtues of his dead friend and presses upon the mourning spinster his own cigarette case, scarfpin and watch, those last mementos which were entrusted to his care in Somaliland and which it is now his last sad duty to his old friend to deliver. Then he grows curious and begins to ask *Celia* pointed questions regarding her experiences at Southampton with *Smith* and the incidents which brought about the love affair. These episodes lead to a delightfully humorous fencing between the pair and delay the visitor's departure until he misses his train. No choice is left to *Celia* but to invite him to remain to dinner, another uncomfortable predicament, since the family is dining out that evening and she must play the hostess alone.

At the dinner in the final act the conversation about the lamented *Smith* is renewed, during which the visitor inadvertently betrays himself. By this time *Celia* has begun to scent the practical joke at her expense and attempts to hide her confusion in a quarrel. But the resourceful *Smith* is even ready for this emergency and proceeds to conquer not only her spirits but her affection. When the rest of the family arrive home *Celia* is prepared not only to announce that her dead lover has returned to life but that never again will there be need for her to wear green stockings.

The characters in the play are numerous enough to give a fair representation of the formal country life of an aristocratic family. The burden of the story rests upon Miss Anglin, who acts *Celia* with plenty of humorous appreciation, and Mr. H. Reeves-Smith, whose richly amusing and very genteel rôle of *Colonel Smith* is by far the better character of the two.

OUT of a list of perhaps a dozen operettas of native and foreign origin that have blossomed into existence during the last month, Mr. Victor Herbert's

"The Enchantress" seems to be best able to withstand the chill of the midwinter season. Not only has Mr. Herbert composed for it an unusual number of swinging, inspiring melodies but Fred de Gresac, abetted by the inevitable Mr. Harry B. Smith, has fashioned a story which really has some semblance of a plot.

"The Enchantress," it may be said, loses little in its performance. There is the usual mythical kingdom governed by an amorous prince. In this case the kingdom is Zergovia, which seems to be adjacent to Mr. Anthony Hope's Zenda. At any rate it is in the Balkans. The prince is named *Ivan* and he is as blind as the rest of his kind to the interests of his loyal subjects who, with that fortitude observed in all comic-opera communities, do not let their political woes interfere with their pleasures.

It is time for *Prince Ivan* to choose a titled wife but his heart is set upon *Vivien Savary*, an opera singer. So smitten is he with this enchantress of the stage that he has told his ministers to look elsewhere for a ruler and leave him free to worship at the feet of his divinity. Thus the court is plunged into intrigues and conspiracies, the object of which is to humble the lady who has won *Prince Ivan's* love. *Ozir*, the Minister of War, heads the faction against the singer but at the moment when their plans seem most likely to succeed, *Vivien* turns the tables on them by proving that she, too, is of royal birth and quite eligible to share the Zergovian throne.

Miss Kitty Gordon, who sings the title rôle, is just a bit too icy in her personality to be the lure of the young Zergovian potentate. It would have been much more plausible if he had succumbed to the charms of *Marion Love*, an American heiress who, as impersonated by Miss Nellie McCoy, presents much the greater fascinations. However, there is no accounting for tastes—in operetta.

One almost loses track of the story in the delights of Mr. Herbert's melodic accompaniment. He has provided twenty musical numbers, ten of which are genuine hits.